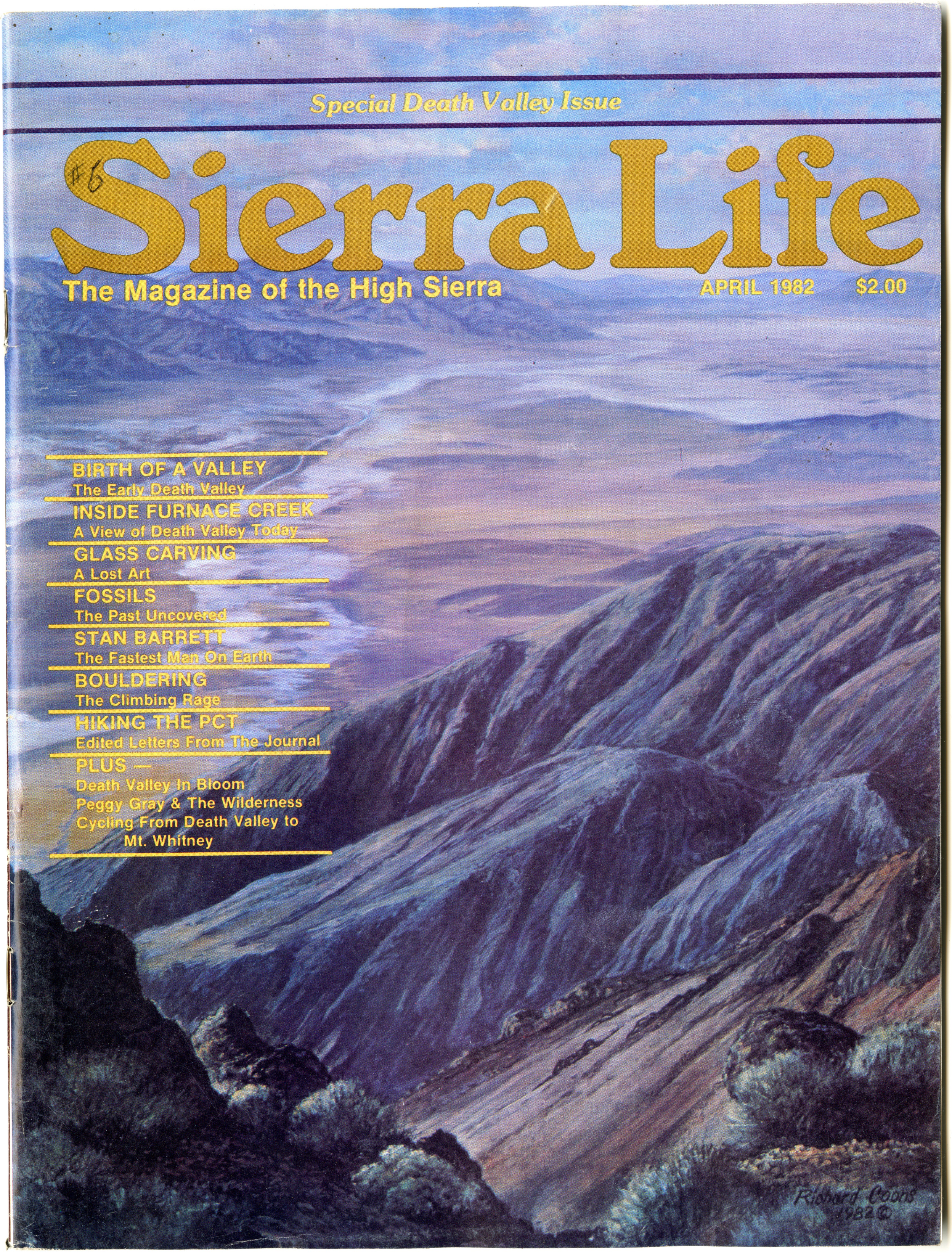
Special Death Valley Issue

#6

Sierra Life

The Magazine of the High Sierra

APRIL 1982 $2.00



BIRTH OF A VALLEY
The Early Death Valley

INSIDE FURNACE CREEK
A View of Death Valley Today

GLASS CARVING
A Lost Art

FOSSILS
The Past Uncovered

STAN BARRETT
The Fastest Man On Earth

BOULDERING
The Climbing Rage

HIKING THE PCT
Edited Letters From The Journal

PLUS —
Death Valley In Bloom
Peggy Gray & The Wilderness
Cycling From Death Valley to Mt. Whitney

Bridalveil Falls - Yosemite
Photography by Patty VanDolson

From the Publisher . . .

Prior to 1582 the first of April was New Years Day. There were some diehards who refused to accept January first and so were known as April Fools. For this auspicious month Sierra Life has pulled itself up by its typesetter to bring you another great issue. We are grateful to those who missed us while we were busy making chaos out of order. We assure you that our efforts have remained constant. It is our promise to continue to bring you material of the highest quality at the most regular intervals possible without sacrificing picnics, holidays and the sanity of the staff.

See you next time —
Sandie Pramann
Publisher

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Letters . . .

Editor:

Please send me a one year's subscription to Sierra Life. I picked up a copy in the lobby of the Chamonix condo in Mammoth last week and really enjoyed it. As an old friend of the Sierra since a child, it really hits the mark.

How about an article on Red's Meadow and Arch Mahan? He was a former All-American from Stanford and ran a fine pack outfit for years. Would make a fine story.

Thanks,
Col. R.D. White USMC
Camp Pendleton, CA

Ed. note: *We are researching your idea. Look for the story in our May issue.*

It was with very great interest that I recently discovered an issue of your beautiful publication, SIERRA LIFE, at a sports show here in San Francisco. I have for years wondered why there has not been a publication comparable to ROCKY MOUNTAIN for our Sierra region. Now there is, and I thank you for making a quality one!

Sincerely yours,
M.E. Gibson
San Francisco, CA

My husband picked up a copy of your magazine at The Book Store in Ridgecrest. We love it! We've been in this area over 25 years, and I still think in exclamation points (like the Publisher), about the Sierras.

Please send us an annual subscription. Also, we'd like to buy the first issue if still available. Keep up the good work!

D.P. Ankeney
Ridgecrest, CA

Was very pleased to find a magazine on the Sierra's. We picked up a copy at the Bishop Visitors Center Sunday.

Sincerely
C.S. Peterson
Wrightwood, CA

Thank you for a beautiful magazine. We picked up the first copy on our way home from a trip at the Visitors Center near Lone Pine.

It was a delight to read the articles and look at the beautiful pictures as we were travelling along.

Is it possible to give us a story about the Joshua trees we saw - or are they in Mono County?

Great success for your new magazine is my wish for all who work to put out this magazine, Sierra Life.

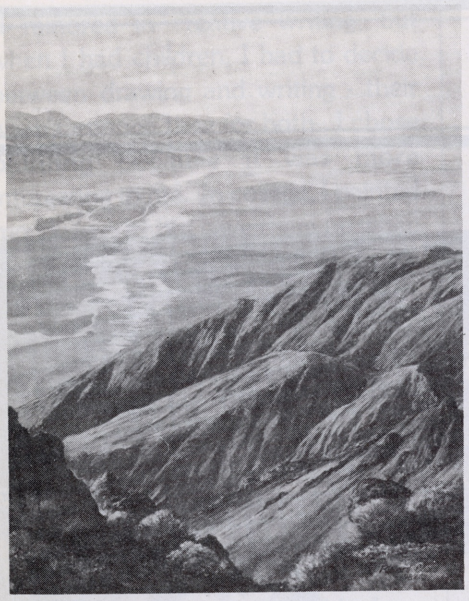
Sincerely yours
Mrs. A.W. McConnell
Ventura, CA

Ed. Note: *We are preparing a pictorial on the Joshua trees in Southern Inyo and Eastern Kern Counties that will appear soon!*

SIERRA LIFE

The Magazine of the High Sierra

VOLUME I APRIL 1982 NUMBER VI



OUR COVER . . .

Artist Richard Coons of Bishop painted this month's cover, Dante's View in Death Valley, California, exclusively for Sierra Life Magazine.
Dante's View is one of the best known points of interest, with Badwater and the Sierra a mile below and one hundred miles beyond. Mr. Coons painted this view on a March afternoon of this year. The painting was done in conjunction with the articles on Death Valley in this issue.

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Peggy Gray and the Wilderness

Peggy Gray at work outside her West Bishop home.

by Jane Fisher

Say you are an artist. It's a summer evening high in the Sierra and you sit with colleagues around a campfire, critiquing the day's painting. You are exhilarated from hiking through stunning mountain landscapes, excited by techniques you have practiced and relaxed after a savory meal prepared by the camp cook. The smell of pines, the black velvet of a night sky undiminished by city lights and sweet, crisp air have bewitched your coffee. What's more, all your equipment was carried around for you by a pack mule.

Say you aren't an artist at all. It still sounds enticing.

This is the unique teaching concept of Peggy Gray, one of the major painters of the Eastern Sierra region. Mrs. Gray graduated from Smith College in Massachusetts and earned her M.F.A. at U. C. Berkeley. She continued to study with such painters as Rex Brandt, Morris Shubin, and Milford Zornes. She and her husband, a geologist, backpack the Sierra almost every summer. For the past twelve years, she has taught art and art history extension classes for U. C. Riverside, as well as drawing, painting and art history at Bishop High School. She worked with Genny Schumacher (Smith) on drawings for *Deepest Valley* , the guide to Owens Valley mountains, lakes and trails. Her *Watercolor in the Wilderness* class combines backcountry and professional experience in a week of hiking, painting, instruction, demonstration and critique in the John Muir Wilderness. Mammoth Lakes packers, Lou and Mary Roeser, tenderly provide pilot, shepherd and guardian service.

> ***". . . in college, I painted mostly in oils, but gave them up when the children came. I thought children would get them all over the house and eat them, so I did watercolors."***

Peggy and Ray Gray live in a woodsy home they built on the west side of Bishop, where large lawns and running streams are tree-shaded and hidden by tall evergreens. There is plenty of on-hand scenery for her private workshops in landscape drawing, and room for children. Her willingness to work with interruption in order to raise four children and teach has added dimension to her life, but distracted from her pursuit of a full-time painting career.

(Continued on next page.)

Peggy Gray *continued*

"I minored in creative writing, but when I had children, I had to decide between drawing and writing - their wasn't enough time for both. I chose painting because it was more interesting to me. In college, I painted mostly in oils, but gave them up when the children came. I thought children would get oil paints all over the house and eat them, so I did watercolors.

"If I had to wait for both time and the right mood to paint, I'd never get those two things together, so I just snag onto whatever time there is - that's what women have to do."

Peggy tells about the studio her husband has built for her. "For years, I painted on the dining room table. I can remember the classic scene. One of the children was playing with the dog under the table and I wondered how long I could stand the distraction. I thought I had been extremely patient and finally asked them very nicely to remove themselves. 'Oh, I just knew you'd be crabby if you were painting,' I was condemned.

"I'm glad to have graduated from the dining room table."

Peggy had grown up an only child. Her father was a mining engineer and the family moved every few years. Their longest stay was in Korea, where she became fluent in the language.

"I was the different one, there. It taught me something about being the minority."

When the Japanese moved people out of Korea, the family took a trip around the world on a Swedish freighter.

"My folks could probably have used the money more prosaically, but they were young and adventuresome. I was the only child aboard, and didn't have to go to school. I did have to study the geography of any place we were going to visit. I was probably spoiled."

Nevertheless, her foresighted

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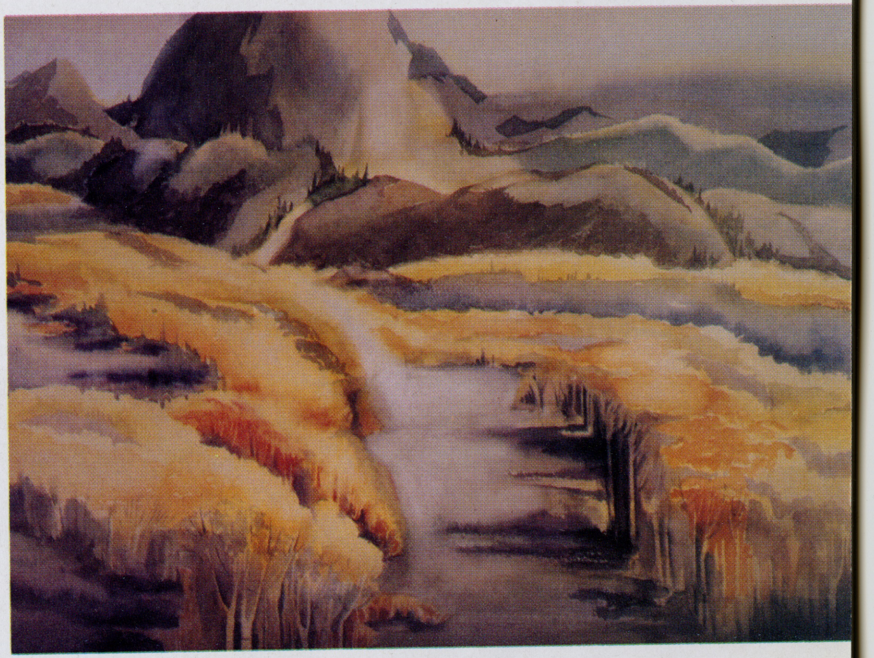
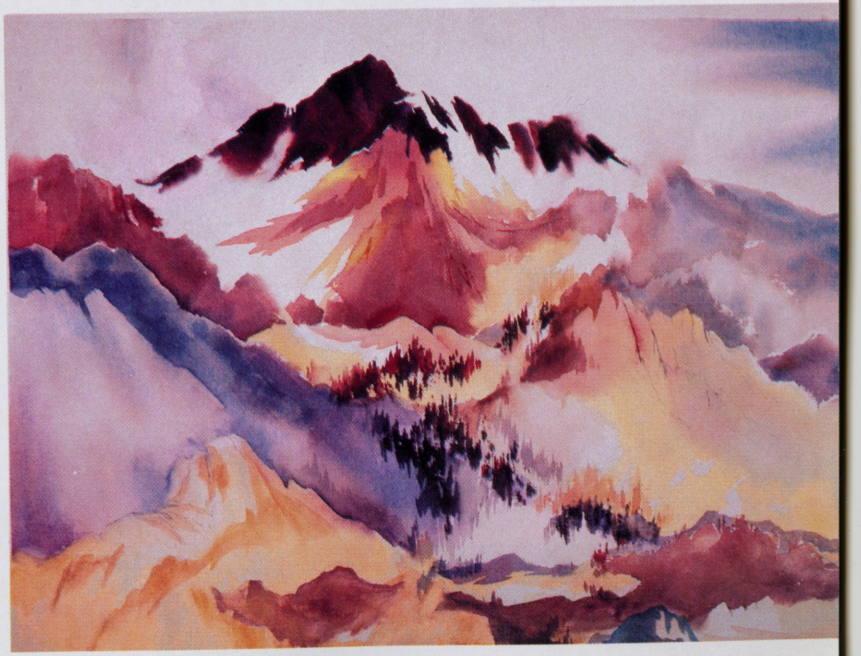
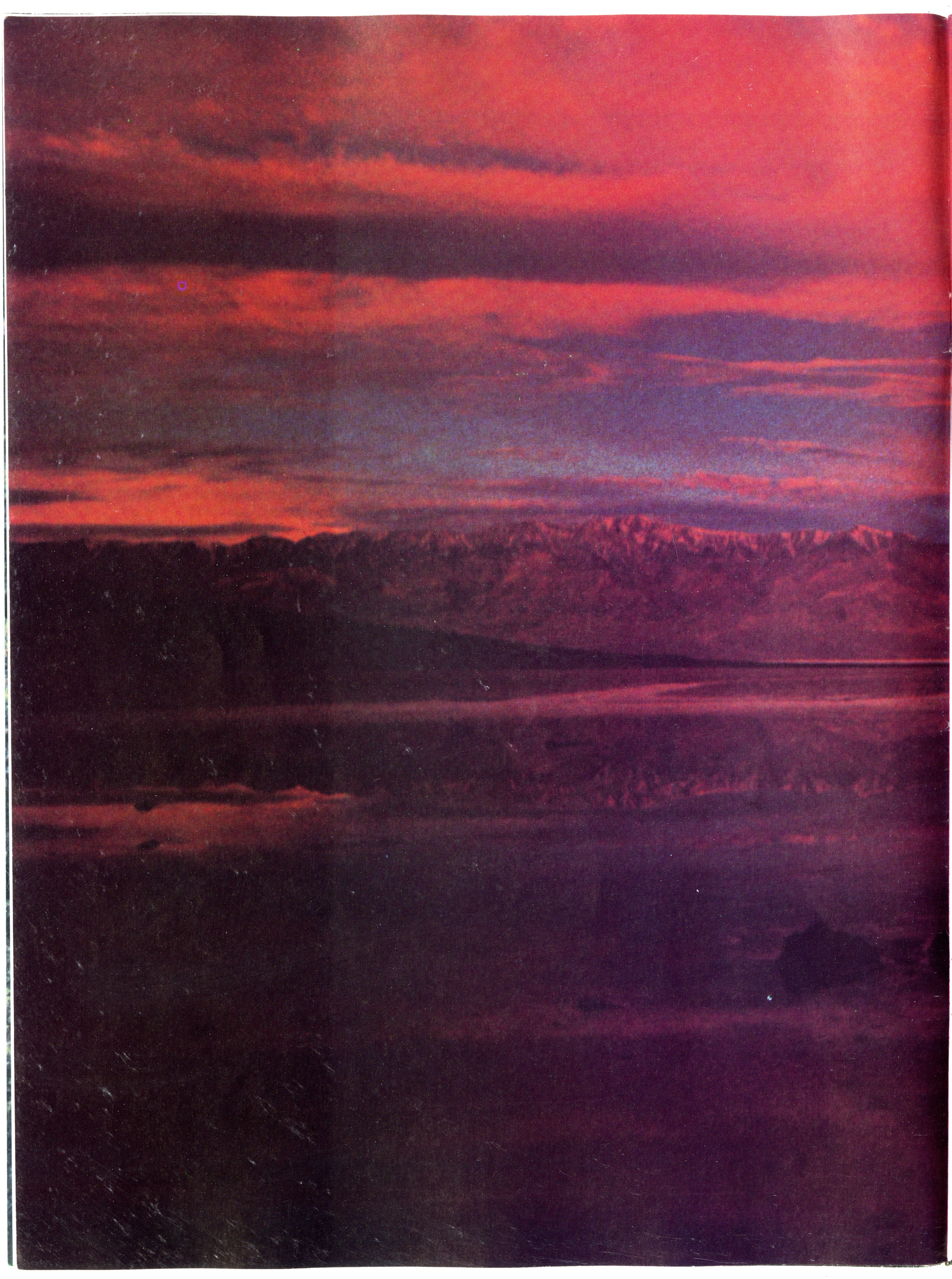
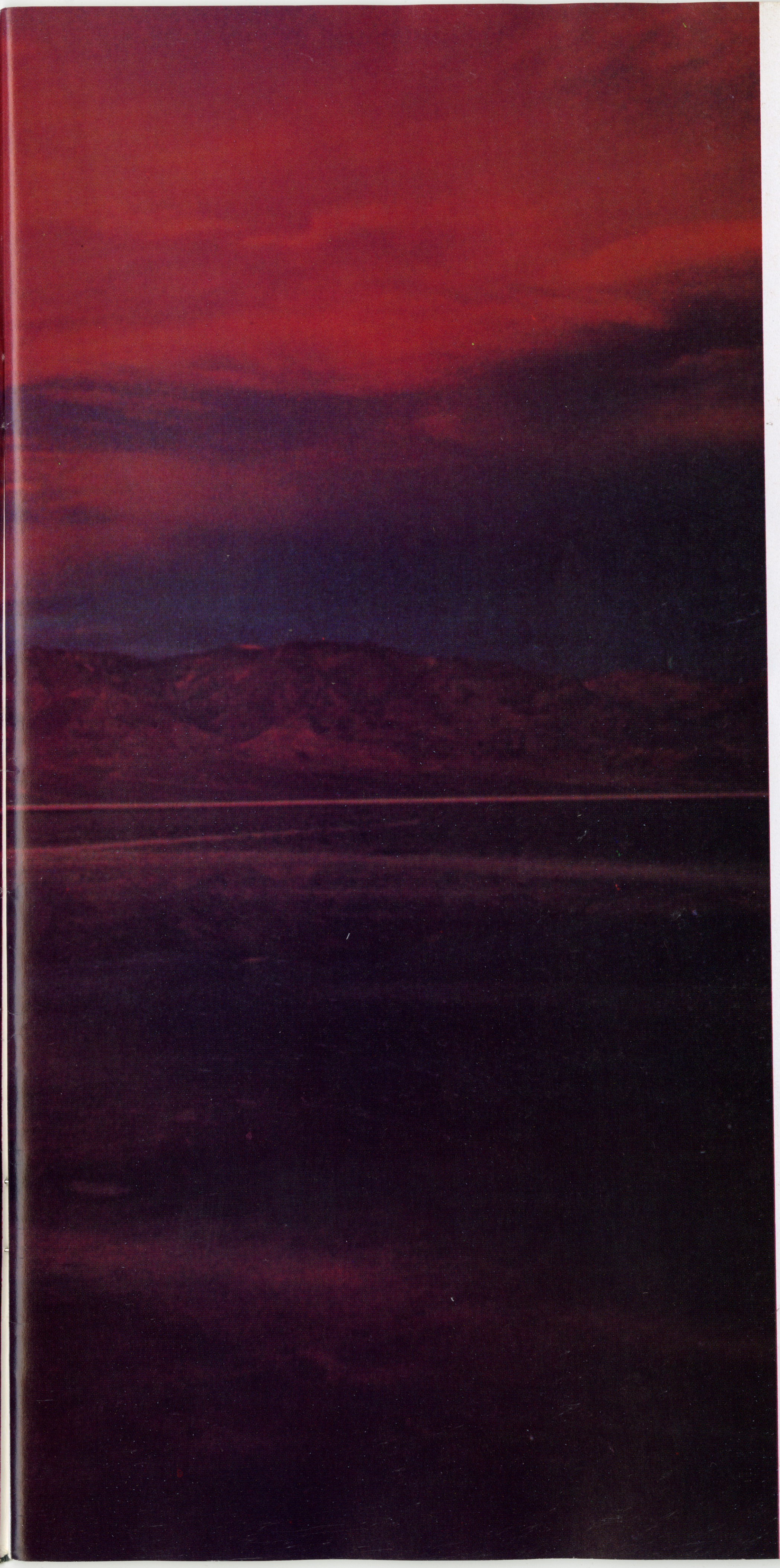


"Remembering October" — 21" x 28"



"Mt. Humphries" — 21" x 28"





Birth of a Valley

by Valerie J. Naso

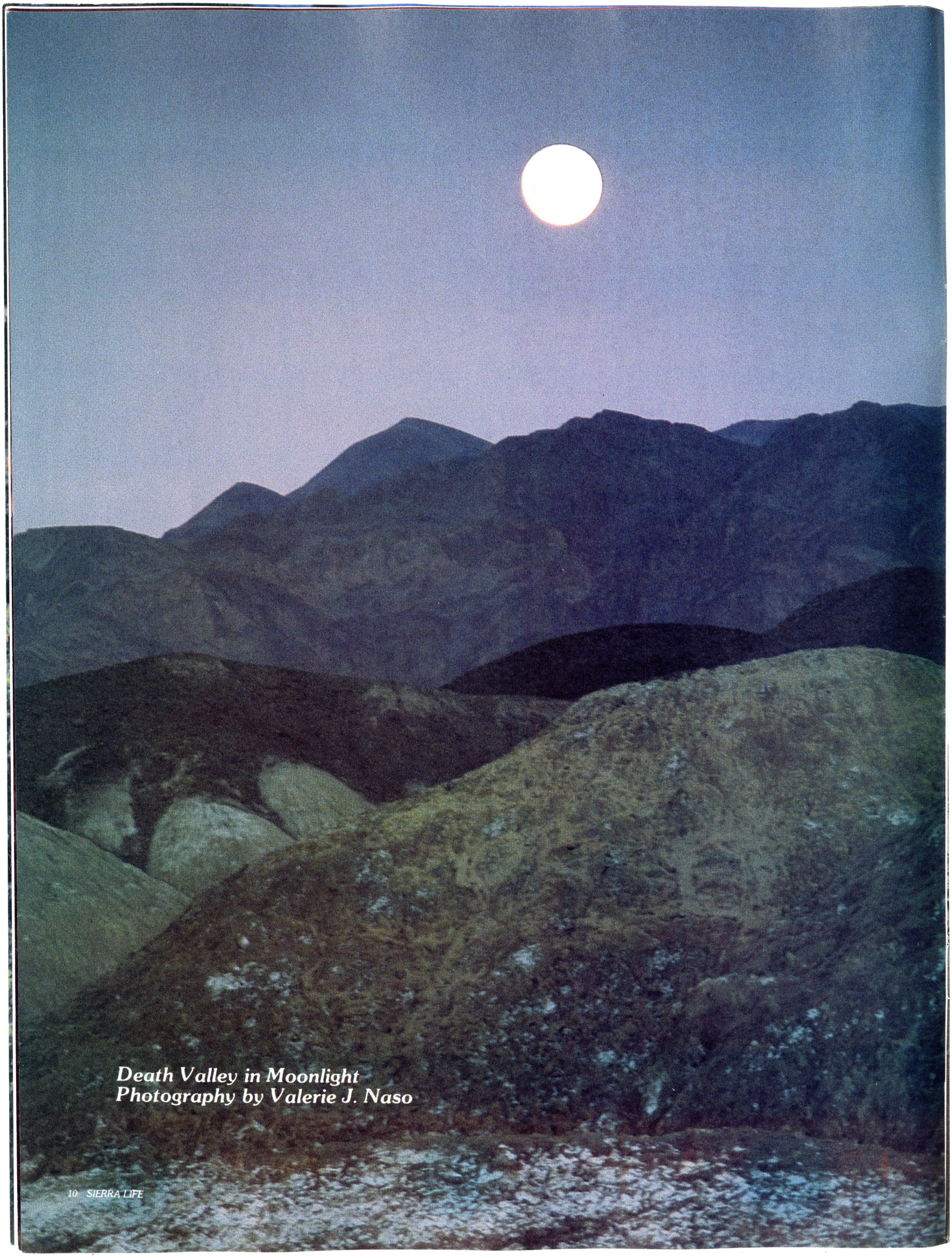
Death Valley — the history, legends and myths.

The February sun was warm and it lit the desert walls in shades of pink and gold and orange and sparkled on the salt beds as Abigail Arcan adjusted her best dress and tied her finest ribbons to her hat. The wind picked them up and blew them in gay streamers behind her as she turned her attention to her son Charlie. He was barely a year old, but he was dressed fit to kill in his best Sunday outfit, the one Abigail had packed so carefully on this long journey. Now he must wear it out or she would have to leave it to adorn some Indian papoose.

Her husband John, Asabel Bennett and Lewis Manly were busy putting the pieced packs over the back of their best ox, Old Crump, for the children to ride in. "How in the world do you expect to keep the children on?" Lewis had asked.

"We have taken two strong hickory shirts," said Asabel, "turned the sleeves inside, sewed up the necks, then sewed the two shirts together by the tail. They will make two pockets

View of Badwater (lowest point in the United States) in Death Valley. Valerie J. Naso photo.



Death Valley in Moonlight
Photography by Valerie J. Naso

for the youngest children, and the two others will be able to cling to his back."

Abigail cast a look around what had been their camp for the past 25 days. The four battered wagons stood with the ribs exposed, for it had been necessary to cut the canvas to use for packs for the oxen. Feathers floated in the breeze or clung briefly to the brush; she and Sarah Bennett had been forced to cut up their feather ticking in order to make use of the cloth. Abigail's chin came up. She was abandoning all her worldly possessions save those she could wear, but she was not going to leave her tablecloth! She had woven the cloth on her hand loom back in Massachusetts and she would take it with her even if she had to tie it to her waist. She knew she looked more than a little funny as she knotted it about her, but she didn't care, it was going with her. The men smiled. Fine. It was good for them.

John Rogers, the big strong Tennessee lad was packing blankets and meager provisions on his ox while Sarah settled George and three year old Martha on Old Crump's back. "Be sure you hold onto that band around his stomach," she cautioned.

Asabel Bennett led their ox up for Sarah to mount. "We will succeed, I know it. Don't you, Sally?"

She sighed as she thought of the many days it would take them to reach the fertile valley Lewis and John had described. "I hope so."

John helped Abigail to her seat of blankets on the back of Old Brigham, the ox he had purchased in Salt Lake City. He would name the beast after the Mormon leader! She patted her ribbons and adjusted the fold of her tablecloth, looking back at little Charlie in his strange seat on the brindle ox. In another five months she and John would have a second child.

Cuff wagged his tail expectantly. He was a good dog; John had trained him for hunting in the eastern woods. Cuff had not expected to end up in an alkali desert, but he did his best and kept up.

The procession started slowly down the soft sandy road; it was nearly level and the going was not hard. Abigail hung on to her strap around Old Brigham and turned to look over her shoulder at the children. Her husband and Asabel doffed their hats in a final salute as the journey west lurched to a start. Ah, Abigail thought, to ride out of this miserable valley — even on the back of an ox!

The troup had covered scarcely four miles when one of the packs slipped. Abigail watched the frightened ox do a regular dance, bawling all the while as it tried to escape from its load. It was only moments before the other oxen joined in this wild desert jig and blankets and tea kettles were scattered in every direction. Trustworthy Old Brigham bucked as wildly as the rest, but Abigail hung on as her ribbons spun about her head. She caught a glimpse of John and Sally rescuing the children, but no one rescued her and still she clung to the back of her ox as it plunged and kicked. My best clothes in the desert, she thought, as she clenched the strap. Never!

It was to no avail. Abigail found herself unhurt and on the ground along with everything else. The little group was laughing as hard as they could at the sight of her wearing ribbons and a tablecloth while doing trick riding. Having shed her, Old Brigham stood as placidly as if nothing had ever happened.

After they dusted themselves off and re-packed the oxen it was decided the rest of the trip would be on foot.

This escape by the last remnant of the Death Valley 49ers began when John Rogers and William Lewis Manly returned to the forced camp of the little party they had left behind in order to scout a way out of the valley. It took the pair nearly a month to reach civilization and return to help the Bennetts and Arcans escape. During this time other families gave up on their return and three wagons pulled away from camp.

The pair almost died of thirst and starvation. In Soledad Canyon they shot a quail, a hawk and a crow, a bird that Manly later referred to as "the abominable crow!" Said he, "Ever since that day, when I have heard people talk of eating crow as a bitter pill, I think I know all about it from experience."

They returned to camp to joyous cries of, "The boys have come!" The relief was tempered by the realization that it was a very long walk out and the women were difficult to console, weeping most of the time. It is scant wonder that one of the party cast a final glance at the place and muttered, "Goodbye, Death Valley!"

They walked and struggled. Abigail said her limbs ached so much she did not think she could even go on the next day. Said Manly, "We are not going to leave you two ladies out here to die for there is not a sign of a grave to put you in."

And so they went on with Old Crump carrying the children and Cuff running beside him. They walked until they reached the place Manly had promised them, Rancho San Francisquito. Here they were fed and clothed and rested until they could go their own ways.

At the same time there were other parties struggling to get out of Death Valley. The Jayhawkers, a group of well prepared young men from Illinois, finally burned their wagons near the present site of Stove Pipe Wells Village, smoked the meat of their oxen and took off on foot over the Panamint Mountains. They were bound together by vows of brotherhood and this group spirit probably saved more than one member of the party. In later life, their reunions continued until February of 1918 when the last survivors, Lorenzo Dow Stephens and Robert B. Colton were in their nineties.

There were the Bug Smashers, the Georgians and the Mississippians as

(continued on next page)

well as other splinter groups, all of whom struck out in an every-man-for-himself escape attempt. All were forced to abandon their wagons and eat their oxen because they could find no pass through the mountains.

Only one famiy made a solo exit from the valley and got out with their wagon, oxen and possessions. Henry Wade, Sr. and his wife Mary had followed behind the Bennett-Arcan group by about a day. They struck south alone and made it, something so boring that history has given them little attention. They settled in Alviso, California where families still trace their ancestry to this determined Englishman.

All this trouble can be traced to Capt. Wesley Smith (sometimes known as O.K. Smith) who had a map showing a supposed short cut to the California gold fields. This route had been traced in the sand by the celebrated Ute Indian horsethief, Walkara. Smith's party camped with the Jayhawkers long enough to plant the notion that a cut off shown on a map must be real; from then on there was dissent in every party including the large group led by Capt. Jefferson Hunt. It was from this group that the Bennetts and Arcans came. Capt. Hunt refused to follow the map and led the remainder of his party safely along the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles. Capt Smith conveniently disappeared over the western mountains.

Indians were around long before the crazy white people descended into the valley. They called it Tomesha, or ground afire. They spent a lot of time hunting up something to eat and they made use of everything — sand grass seeds and the fruit of the devil's pincushion and the prickly pear. When the weather got too hot the tribes headed higher up into the mountains. All this simplicity changed when the 49ers left their frying pans and other utensils for the squaws to figure out.

It was the dream of gold that drew people West. After the 1849 debacle Death Valley was rumored to be a terrible place and men warned each other of the hazards to be found there. The combination of being told to stay away and the possibility of instant riches sent many prospectors scurrying back to Death Valley as fast as their burros would go. One of the first incentives was the Gunsight Mine. It was discovered in 1849 by one of the Mississippians when he lost the sight off his gun and picked up a piece of silver float. He carried out samples that soon had half of Los Angeles looking for the location. In 1850 it became the Lost Gunsight Mine and it remains lost to this day.

"The solution turned out to be Nevada Senator William M. Stewart, a chance acquaintance of one of the robbers."

Mining camps proliferated under similarly strange conditions. Panamint City was discovered in 1873 when an assortment of desperados kept ahead of the law by holing up in Surprise Canyon with their take from Wells Fargo. The surprise was on them when their idle scratchings on the surrounding rock showed an abundance of extremely high grade silver ore. The thieves were perplexed; how could they stake claims and develop their fortune when they were busy hiding out?

The solution turned out to be Nevada Senator William M. Stewart, a chance acquaintance of one of the robbers. In return for an interest in the new mine for himself and fellow senator John P. Jones, Steward agreed to find out what sort of settlement Wells Fargo would make in the case. The price of respectability was rumored to be $12,000 paid to Wells Fargo. Restitution was made, claims were filed and road building began, however, Wells Fargo declined to run a stage line into the new town.

The Myerstein Brothers of San Bernardino agreed to fill the gap thanks to a large payment in bullion and they operated a stage that required two weeks of sandy desert travel.

In spite of its isolated location, the steep narrow canyon, Panamint enjoyed four years of boomtown status and wild living before a gully buster came one night and washed the entire town away.

Prospector Frank "Shorty" Harris and his partner Pete Aguereberry were heading for Ballarat, another lively gold camp in Death Valley. They were intent on celebrating the Fourth of July and not even the discovery of gold along the way could deter them. They returned to the site as did everyone else who had heard the story, and Harrisberry was born. That was more of a name than the press could handle and in short order it became Harrisburg. The area produced a good quantity of gold.

Pete had himself a pretty neat little house. He also built a road to his own private vista point which he called Fine View. When Death Valley became a National Monument in 1933 the Automobile Club of Southern California came out to see what was going on. Phil Townsend Hanna, their public relations director, was so impressed with Pete's road that they put up a sign naming it Aguereberry Point, the name it bears today.

Skidoo was pretty close to Harrisburg. It was discovered by One-Eye Thompson and Harry Ramsey when they got lost in a fog on their way to see what was up at Harrisburg. While in this fog they found a ledge rich in gold which eventually sold for $600,000 to Bob Montgomery, a Nevada mining man.

Skidoo was famous as the town where "the hanging" took place. One "Hooch" Simpson became drunk and disorderly and shot and killed Jim Arnold of the Southern California

(continued on next page)

Bank. The citizens did not want this to happen again and they immediately hanged Hooch and left him up overnight as an example to any other would-be killers. Let them go to Panamint. After they cut him down the next day a photographer came through wanting a picture of the event. So they hoisted Hooch up and hanged him again for the benefit of the press.

For some time when men would go out in the desert searching for wealth it was said they had gone breyfogling. This term came about after Charles Brefogle set out across the desert, either with or following a group of Southerners who were trying to find the Confederacy. He was camped with this group when they were attacked and murdered by Indians. Breyfogle escaped and ran a good way carrying his boots as he felt it was not prudent to sit down long enough to put them on. After a few days of wandering around he was starved and probably delirious — just the right time to find an incredibly rich gold mine.

He was captured by more Indians and served as an amusement to them until one youth beat him about the head with part of a tree. It fuddled his mind as well as nearly killing him and the Indians decided to give him back to the whites. He was nursed back to health at the Manse Ranch near Pahrump, Nevada by Mrs. Yount and Mrs. Harsha White., but he never quite got his mind in order. He spent the rest of his life searching for his lost mine.

Rhyolite enjoyed a brief career, however, by the time they had run three railroads into town and built a large school the town had died. It is said that when Mr. Jim MacLaughlin bought the railroad station in 1927 he found a mumified cow in the waiting room. It was suggested she had missed the last train in 1908 and had died while waiting for another.

Rhyolite is the home of the bottle house. I used to visit Tommy Thompson when he lived there. One day we went to see Tommy and he was very upset. His best friend had died. "The doctor told him to quit smoking and drinking," Tommy lamented, "but he wouldn't listen. He was just a youngster."; We inquired how old his friend had been. "97", he said.

Greenwater had the distinction of having the most fuss over the least ore. They called it "The Greatest Copper Camp On Earth," but it fell somewhat short of the expectations and produced more chaos than copper. It started off with a disagreement over who actually discovered the camp and where they should build the town. For a while there were two locations a half mile apart. One was called Greenwater, but everyone referred to it as Kunze after Arthur Kunze, one of the discoverers. The other site was officially known as Copperfield and was called Ramsey — after Harry Ramsey.

The Ramsey location won because there was more room for the town to grow, and no one doubted that it would. The first issue of C.B. Glasscock's "Death Valley Chuck-Walla" magazine was mailed from a post office on wheels that was mired in a chuck hole between the two camps. Citizens from each post spent a lot of time going from one place to the other for necessities as they couldn't seem to get both eggs and mail in one spot.

Eventually lack of good ore and a terrible water shortage caused Greenwater (they had decided the name) to fold, but not before many fortunes had been invested.

Other camps boomed and died. Bullfrog, Hannapah and Chloride Cliff. All are gone today. Darwin alone remains in a semi-conscious condition. (See Sierra Life, December 1981).

While the 49ers were tramping across Death Valley they were unknowingly crossing some of the richest deposits of borax. No one knew there was any such stuff in the United States until John A. Veatch discovered some in Tehama County in 1856.

Aaron and Rosie Winters were living in abject poverty in a stone house at Ash Meadow near the valley. Their guest one night was a prospector who described testing for borax with sulphuric acid and alcohol. The flame must be green. "If you'll go out there and run a test for borax, Aaron, you'll be a rich man."

Winters didn't waste any time and soon he and Rosie were waiting for darkness to test the spot he thought was likely. He lit his match. "She burns green, Rosie! We're rich, by God!" It is still called the "Rosie burn green" test by some mining people.

Winters got $20,000 with which he retired to Pahrump. William T. Coleman got the claims and called his company the Greenland Salt and Borax Company. He built a refinery and warehouses and 36 crystallization tanks that were later called the Harmony Borax Works.

Coleman also took over the ranch that had belonged to one "Bellerin' Teck," a man not fond of civilization. The feeling apparently was mutual. Coleman called it Greenland and planted fruit trees and alfalfa. It is now called Furnace Creek Ranch. (See Inside Furnace Creek on page 54).

Isadore Daunet started the Eagle Borax works in the late 1870's and ran it until 1884 when he killed himself in San Francisco, an event that probably can be blamed on the trauma of a harrowing crossing of Death Valley one summer.

The famous borax wagons were designed by J.W.S. Perry and had a capacity of ten ton.

F.M. "Borax" Smith organized the whole thing as the Pacific Borax Company. Smith and the 20 mule teams made Death Valley borax famous.

Today the Billie Mine is the only

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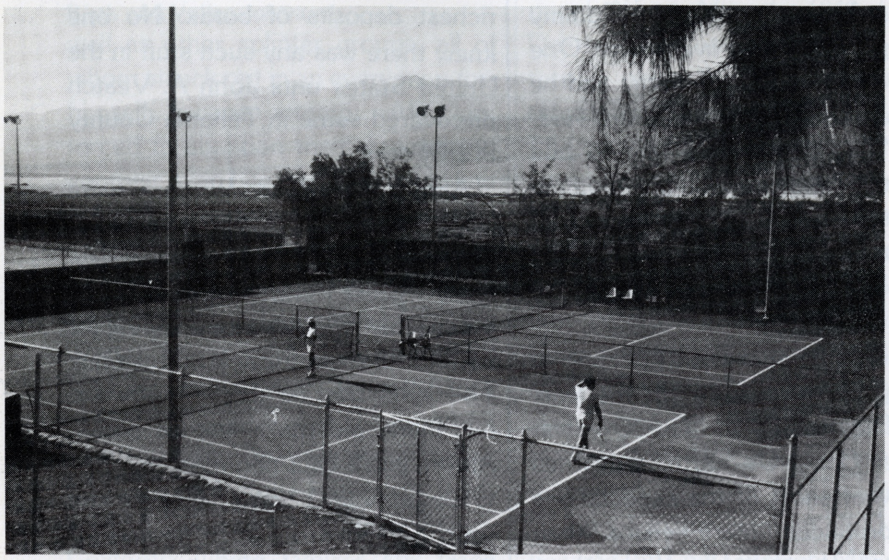

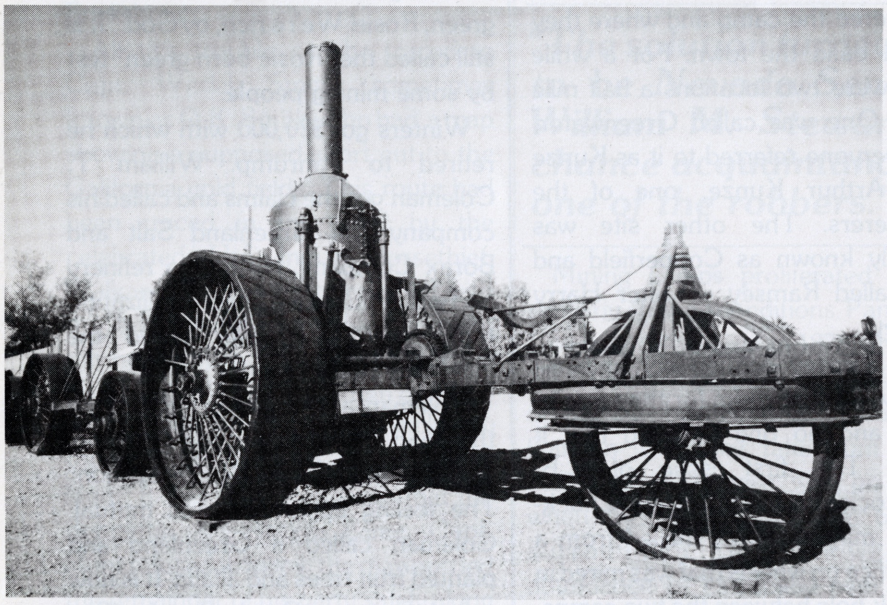

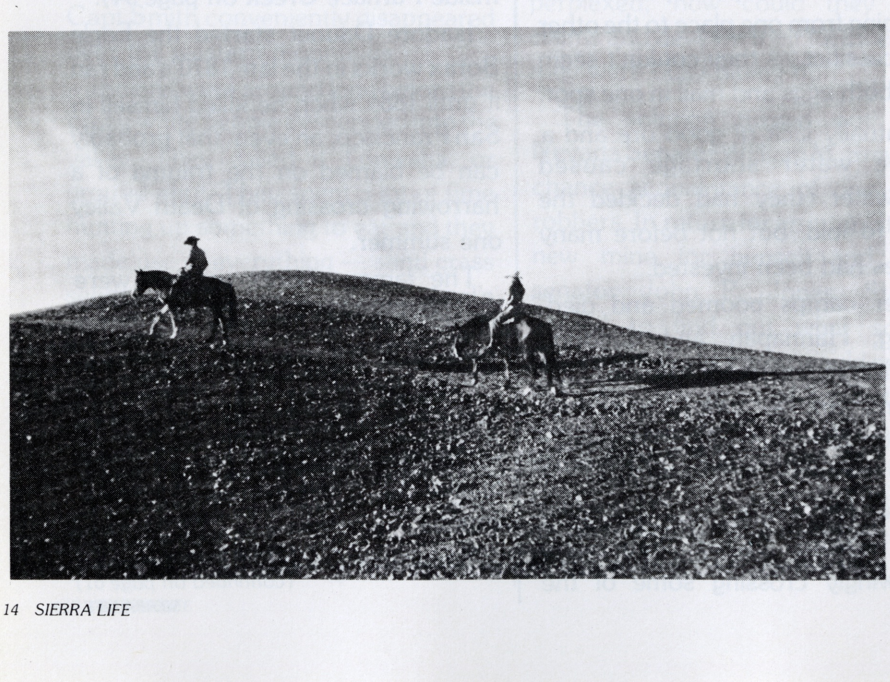

TOP: Tennis courts at Furnace Creek Inn with Telescope Peak in the distance.
CENTER: "Dinah," part of the old Borax mining equipment in front of Furnace Creek Ranch.
BOTTOM: Horseback riding on the bluff above Furnace Creek Inn.
Photos by Valerie J. Naso

Inside Furnace Creek

Photos and text
by Valerie J. Naso

Panamint City, so the story goes, was so well known for sin and bloodshed that a reporter was dispatched from the east to come see for himself. A few miles out of town he was nearly run down by a naked man who was riding a raging lion, using tarantulas for spurs and waving a live rattlesnake as a whip. "Say," yelled the reporter, "Is it as tough up there as I've heard?" As the man rode by, he

The Furnace Creek Inn was not completely finished when it opened in February, 1927.

called over his shoulder, "I don't know, but they run me out."

Like this city that is no more, Death Valley is full of wild tales and contradictions. In fact, it is not a valley at all. It is a graben, an area bordered by mountainous faults where the center has sunk like a fallen cake. The slow process is still going on. One of the main attractions, Scotty's Castle, never belonged to Death Valley Scotty and the actual owner, Albert Mussey Johnson, didn't discover until 1933 that because of a survey error he did not own the land on which he had built his mansion. A proclamation by President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave him the right to buy for $1.25 an acre the 1,529.80 acres he thought were already his.

Let's take a look at this stone castle in the desert in what is now the north end of the Death Valley National Monument. This creation of Mediterranean turrets, huge rooms and hand carved Roman gates was the result of the blending of two unique personalities: Johnson and Scott. Johnson was an eastern millionaire insurance man with a bad back and an inclination for the desert. He provided the money because he enoyed Scotty's company. Death Valley Scotty was an ex-rodeo performer with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and he made up his own legends as he went along, the most persistent one being his secret gold mine in the valley. This was finally proven fraudulent in a 1941 lawsuit brought by disillusioned grubstaker Julian M. Gerard, but Johnson apparantly didn't mind. He backed Scotty, saying, "He repays me in laughs."

They were expensive laughs. Generally speaking, construction in Grapevine Canyon began in 1922 and lasted until 1931. Even then it was not complete and it had cost two million dollars. Half finished bathrooms and a swimming pool with no bottom, plus other incomplete plans told the story of Johnson's losses in the 1929 stock market crash.

After a garrulous old age when he regaled visitors in his castle - he was fond of saying, "The Castle? Hell. It's the best damn place in town!" - Scotty died in 1954 and was buried on Windy Point, an appropriate location.

Said one visitor from Alberta, "We were rather disappointed to find Death Valley Scotty was a scoundrel. We heard a different story in Canada."

Probably the one that Scotty perpetuated, but many a western

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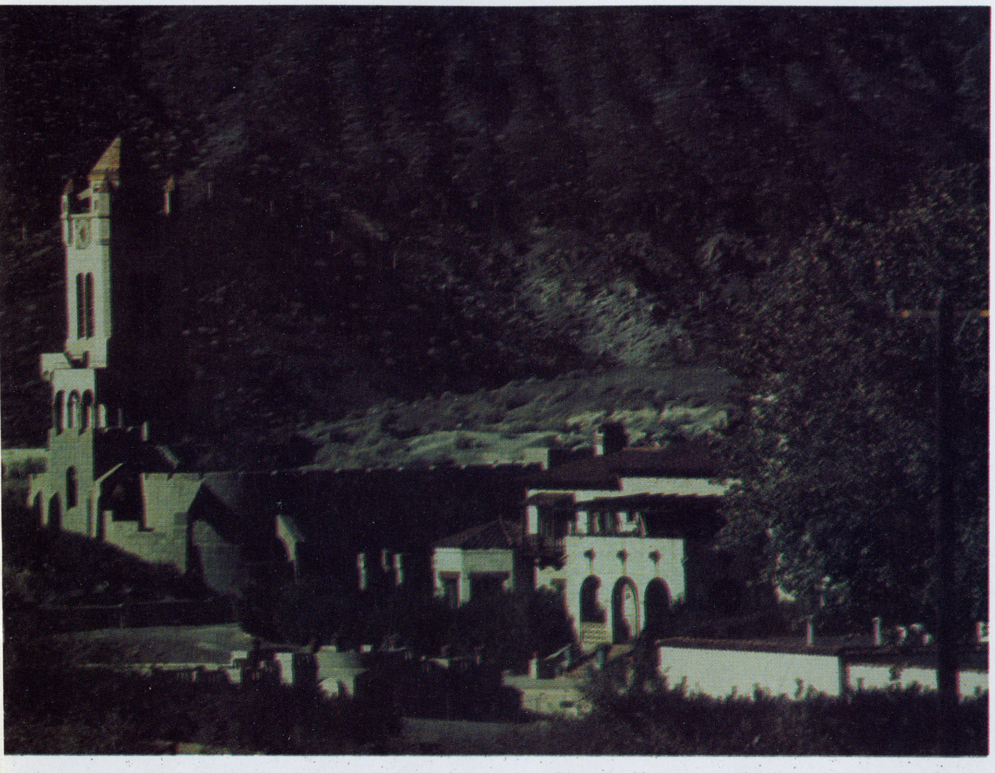

character has found his fortune in someone else's pocket and Johnson stoutly defended his friend's personal honesty.

Scotty would doubtless be pleased that hundreds of people still come to see his castle and marvel at the furnishings and workmanship.

Along about the same time another unusual building project began fifty-three miles to the south of the castle in the hottest, driest, damndest location in the country: Furnace Creek. The Pacific Coast Borax Works built the Furnace Creek Inn using adobe bricks made on the site by Panamint Indians. The cost of $30,000 was considered high, the building was not completely finished - or furnished - when it opened in February of 1927, and the Auto Club did not even know there was an Inn. Roads were so poor that transportation via the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad was suggested. In spite of all this people came. They crossed the valley by touring car and early photos show the new pioneers smiling happily while waving at unknown photographers.

Charlie Succop, a Goldfield minerologist, remembers the beginning. "I was with the CCC Camp and I helped dig the Inn's swimming pool. There was nothing there then. There was a little alcove in one of the stone tunnels where they sold liquor. There was no Ranch and the date farm was just a working farm. They closed the road in the summer and the only people they let in were the date farmers."

Building went on for ten years at the

(continued on next page)

TOP: Scotty's Castle rises like a mystical fortress out of the desert. Construction of the Castle lasted nine years.

BOTTOM: Golfers have a background of shade trees while enjoying the course at the Furnace Creek Golf Club.

Inn until it reached seventy rooms. In addition to the luxurious pool they added a central tower, a stone terrace and the Oasis Supper Club, but it wasn't enough to house the travelers who were drawn to the valley. The Furnace Creek Ranch about a mile down the road had originated in the 1880's as a working ranch to provide rooms for men working the Borax mines and to raise food for the horses and mules. In 1925 a grove of Deglet Noor date palms was planted. By 1933 the Ranch began taking in guests and the old cottages from Boulder Dam (now Hoover) were moved onto the property to provide more accommodations. The newest two story units overlooking the golf course were built in 1975 and the complex is known locally as "the highrise."

Said Marian Peck, Director of Sales, "We've seen this place grow from nothing. People used to come here for their whole vacations and stay three weeks. We had housekeeping cabins and things were small and simple." Marian and Bill Peck came to the valley to live in 1969. The Furnace Creek Golf Club needed a pro and Bill took the job. When the Inn's general manager needed a secretary, Marian was it. One day she heard someone say, "No, we don't have any." Any what? Tour guides. She became tour guide for incoming busses, booked dinners, collected money. "You can't sell a place as remote as this unless you can answer questions like where you can stop along the way and where's a good place for lunch. Everytime I go out of the valley and come back in I'm looking for places. You have to know how to get in and get out." There isn't a question that Marian can't answer.

The Golf Club is 215 feet below sea level and is the lowest grass course in the world. It began in 1927 with three holes that were carved out of an old alfalfa field and irrigated by gravity flow from Travertine Springs above the Inn. A flock of sheep mowed the

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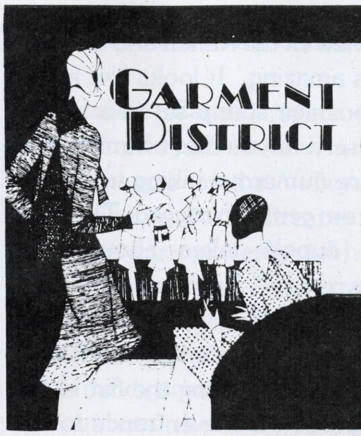

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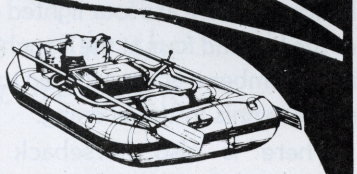

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grass for golfers during the winter.

In 1930 the course became nine holes and since 1968 it has been 18 holes, fully irrigated and minus the sheep. Its pools, palms and splendid view of the snow capped mountains make it one of the most beautiful courses anywhere. Bill's favorite hole is number 12 and the most difficult is said to be number 11. 1980 was the 50th anniversary of the annual Furnace Creek Invitational Golf Tournament, one of the oldest in the nation.

Golf is not the only game. There is a tennis pro at the Inn. Ken Finch is British LTA pro and is available for lessons. There are four lighted courts at the Inn and four at the Ranch. Even in December it is not too cold to play a set of tennis in the evening.

There is also horseback riding morning and afternoon and rides are signed up for in advance. "The horses aren't working today, he says they're changing the oil and converting them from hay to diesel." But they were and trail guide Ray Shields took us up on the bluff above the Inn. There is a cupola on the hill that dates from the early days. It used to be a tea house and guests would hike up and be served tea by a butler in full regalia.

Just watch out for the have-you-seen-a-stick-lizzard story. It goes something like this. It's so hot, especially on the ground, that the lizards have to be able to cool their feet. So they carry a stick around in their mouths and when it gets too hot they stick it in the ground and crawl up on top until their feet cool off. At this point someone may point out a circle of sticks, previously planted, of course.

Wildlife, not including stick lizards, abounds and Gloria told me about one of her first rides. "I told Ray I wanted to see a coyote. He said, 'There's one over there,' and I waited for his nose to grow. But there was a coyote. Ray said, 'That's my friend Ralph Coyote.'"

The view of the Ranch and the date grove is amazing. It looks like a tiny green postage stamp set in a silvery blue desert. If you don't want to ride there are numerous hiking trails that range from gentle to rugged. The walk to the cupola takes about forty minutes.

My favorite coyote was not Ralph, but one I saw crossing the flat in the moonlight below the entrance to the Inn. Fred Harvey may think he owns the place but that coyote certainly thought the same thing.

There is always the sense of the desert being just beyond the borders made by man, no matter how green the grass or how good the food. The Oasis Room at the Inn is lined with cut stone and has large picture windows that look out on the starry night. The flickering orange candles are like the circle of covered wagons at night; it is cozy within. The crisp salad reminded me of Austin, Nevada, where they used to keep the precious lettuce in the old black safe at the grocery store. It is a surprise to have lettuce and lobster and elegance regardless of how many times you experience it.

The Inn is almost like a time warp; quiet, dignified, unchanged. Stone arches, tunnels from one level to another, a lush formal garden with a still pool where it is always cool and plenty of places to sit and look at Telescope Peak across the desert. There is a main dining room in addition to the Oasis. At Christmas, a popular time, the lounge is decorated with a tree cut on company property in the Grand Canyon.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Night the farolitas, little brown paper bags filled with sand and lighted with a candle, are lit. They line every garden path and driveway during the holidays. A pinata party is held on the stone patio in front of the Ranch store and Santa Claus arrives. A Santa suit was hanging in Marian's office, but she wasn't talking.

The atmosphere at the Corkscrew Bar at the Ranch is different; younger and livelier. "Take your clothes off," said a happily grinning man at the bar. "How would you like a Hungarian black eye?" retorted bartender Anne Fortune. But it was all in fun.

"Over Halloween we had punch with fruit from the Inn and vodka and triple sec. We put in some dry ice and it foamed and bubbled all over. It was great." The music is live country at holiday time.

Other big holidays at Furnace Creek are New Years, Easter, Memorial Day and the Fourth of July, when they have a parade that marches three times around the square at the Borax Museum. Probably the best known event is the annual fall gathering of the Death Valley '49ers, a three day encampment that attracts some 30,000 people. If you want solitude pick times other than these. Even the campgrounds overflow.

The Furnace Creek Ranch is a complex unto itself. There is a general store, a coffee shop, cafeteria and The Steak House. The Borax Museum is located in the center of the grassy square. In 1883 it stood in Twenty Mule Team Canyon, where it was built by F. M. "Borax" Smith as an office, bunkhouse and ore checking station. It houses a fine collection of old photographs, mineral specimens that include Death Valley colemanite, memorabilia and letters. From Greenwater a miner wrote that he was working "on the graveyard shift, in the Coffin Mine, Tombstone Mountains, Funeral Range, overlooking Death Valley."

So what draws people to this unusual place? Lee Ek works in the museum and she said, "I've lived here four years. People have asked me what it is that binds me to the Valley, so much so that I see my husband in San Gabriel only on weekends. When we'd leave the Valley, especially after a two or three week vacation, I'd feel

(continued on next page)

displaced, and when we'd come back I'd feel at home. A friend of mine who believes in re-incarnation said, 'Lee, you must have been a Shoshone Indian at one time.' I don't know if that's true or not."

People inevitably ask what there is to do in Death Valley. Lee has one answer. "A while back there were three women who were pregnant at the same time. We wanted to line them up and take a picture. When people would ask, we'd say, well, these women found something to do."

There's a lot to do and the scenery is spectacular. The best times of day for deep colors are sunrise and the hour before sunset. Badwater is a small saline pool 278 feet below sea level and 17 miles south of the Inn. It is very still at sunrise and the only living things you are likely to see are two ravens who make their home there. The pink and gold reflect until there is a mirror image of sky in water. It is well worth the drive, although a friend of mine muttered, "You gotta be sick to do that." This road also includes Artist's Palette, an exceptional array of oranges, red and yellow, and Golden Canyon. Both of these are most colorful in late afternoon.

Jim Fox runs the three year old Art Gallery across the road from the Inn. "I'm the only private enterprise in Death Valley," he said. He is also a wealth of pieces of odd information.

"You know the trees up the canyons? Well, the coyotes would eat the dates down in the valley and come up here for water. They'd deposit the date pits and that's where the trees came from." Jim paints and he may be found sitting outside at his easel or figuring out a new way to paint a night sky.

"Maxfield Parrish used to use ground up Lapis," he said.

The people of the Valley are as interesting as the landscapes. "You get to know people really well here and feelings are strong," Jim Serrano told me. He and his wife, Reba, both work for the company. In his spare time - "It's a mind game more than a physical one out here" - he does woodworking. He did all the signs for the personnel office and the date shop.

"They're all hand done. I don't have any tools or anything. I figure when I'm gone it'll be something for my kids to remember." He also does intricate miniatures of the streets of nearby ghost towns.

Where do these residents go when they want a change? To the small resort at Stovepipe Wells northwest of Furnace Creek or to Death Valley Junction. The Junction is the home of the now-famous Amargosa Opera House created by Marta Becket and her husband, Tom Williams.

Last September, Marta completed a new project, the murals in the Amargosa Opera House. It is wonderful, albeit unlikely place for such items as fresh vegetables and beef stroganoff. The restaurant is currently open only the nights the Opera gives a performance, usually Friday, Saturday and Monday.

This is due to lack of sufficient refrigerator space, but they hope to be open all week by next year. Marta's peopled Spanish village archways, fresh flowers on every table and a background of classical music are worth driving the sixty-six mile round trip from Furnace Creek - or even a trip on its own.

Spring is a time when the Valley turns into a carpet of purple and orange, green and gold.

"It can be February, March or April," Marian said. "They start at one elevation and then work their way up. By May they are at the top of Towne's Pass and the other ones have already burned up. One year the whole alluvial fan was covered with flowers. Then a sandstorm came and stripped the Ubehebe Crater in minutes. The mass of purple on the black lava is just spectacular."

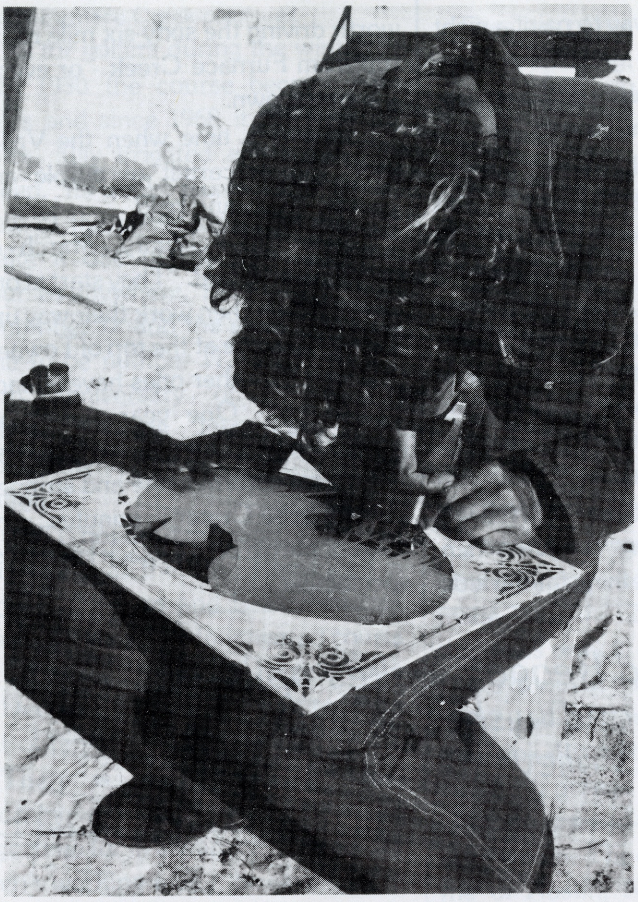
"Don't you suppose Ronald Reagan wakes up in the White House some nights and wishes he were back in Death Valley?"

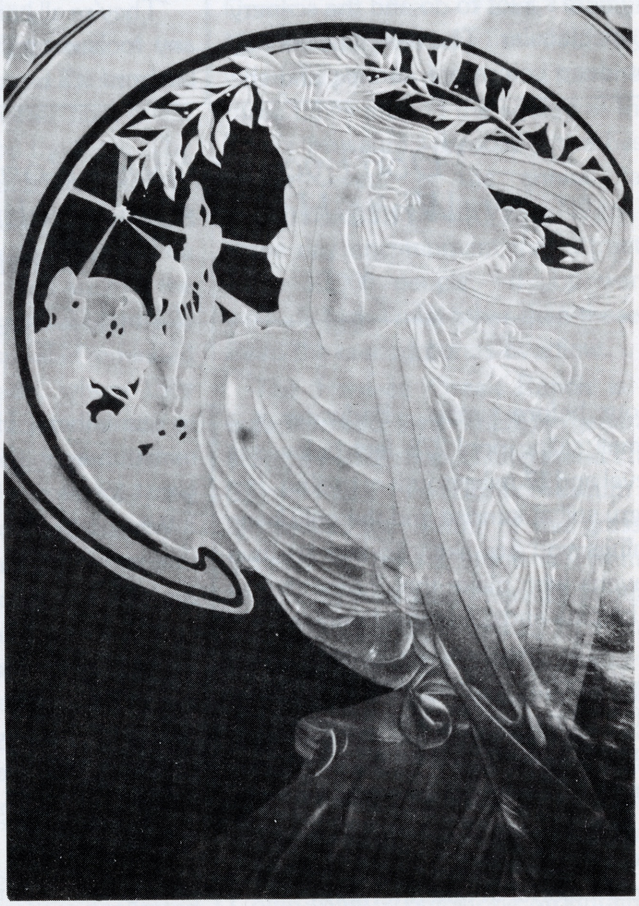
There is a sign in Marian's office that reads, "Don't you suppose Ronald Reagan wakes up in the White House some nights and wishes he were back in Death Valley?" Anyone who has seen it must have this happen sometime.

The Visitors Bureau is crammed with information on the Valley. There are slide shows, movies, bird walks, geology walks, hikes up Golden Canyon and meetings at Badwater and Stovepipe Wells. The Bureau is located near the campgrounds and the road to the airport.

Virgil Olson has worked there five years. He said, "I have to quote what someone else said about the Valley. It's eight months of heaven and four months of hell. But who wouldn't put up with the four months for the heaven?"

NOTE: The Furnace Creek Inn is open from October 15th through May 15th. The Furnace Creek Ranch and Campgrounds are open all year. Reservations, especially at The Inn, are advisable. Always carry water when traveling in the desert - even in winter.

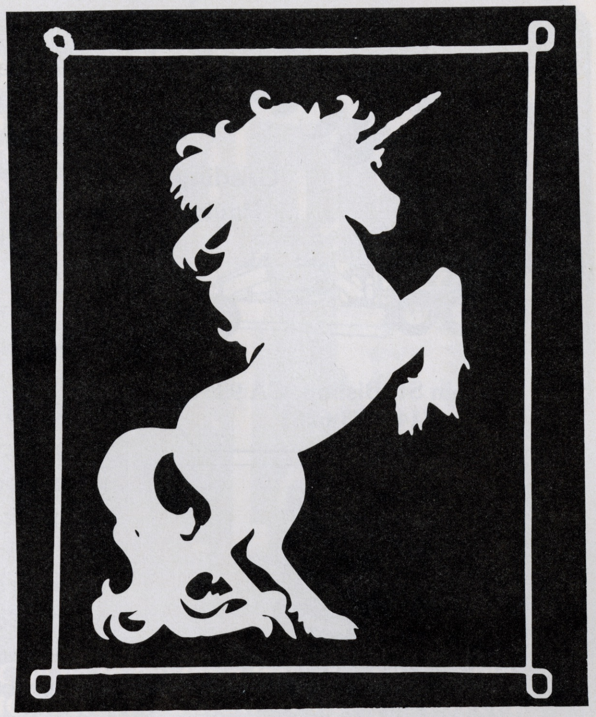




UPPER LEFT: Steve McCarroll signs a finished piece of carved glass. He only signs those pieces he feels are the best.
LOWER LEFT: McCarroll at his outdoor studio in Death Valley Junction.
TOP: One of Steve McCarroll's ladies. This one is patterned after a drawing by Mucha.
Valerie J. Naso Photos

Every Facet of Glass

Glass carving — an art so rare that only 50 - 75 people in the United States have the ability for this delicate work. Stephen McCarroll is one of them.



Steve McCarrol's Unicorn. He considers this his perfect piece of glass. Valerie J. Naso photo.

by Valerie J. Naso

Unlike other artists, if Steve McCarroll doesn't like what he does he may smash it into a thousand pieces. Steve's art, glass carving, is so rare that he estimates there are no more than 50 to 75 people in the United States with the ability to do this delicate work. Carving is not the same as etching. In etched glass only the surface is touched and the effect is a lightly frosted appearance, while a carved piece has lines of varying depth. The deeper the cut the lighter the shading is when the piece is finished. "It's working in reverse. You have to think backwards and it's hard," Steve said.

A piece of carved glass is like a perfecty done drawing except it is executed on a flat sheet of glass. The thickness may vary; Steve uses double strength window glass and has thicker pieces he wants to try. The carving is on the backside and the front is completely smooth. "It's adding three dimensions to glass, it shows the muscle tone and everything," he said.

"I first met Steve when he had come to town - Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley — from his home and studio at Death Valley Junction some 35 miles away." I sit down five and six hours at a time without looking up. I need the isolation of The Junction." He used to live at The Ranch, but he found that people were constantly looking over his shoulder and it was too distracting. Steve's dog Belle, a black and white Spaniel walked into The Corkscrew bar and lay down between stools. "She was the mascot of The Ranch when I lived here. She used to come into the breezeway of the cafeteria when it was hot and they'd always feed her." Belle has the distinction of having sat on and shattered one of Steve's carvings.

Steven Michael McCarroll was born in Inglewood, California "at the age of birth" some 34 years ago. He is tall, blond, blue eyed and independent, something to be expected of a craftsman who has chosen isolation. He went to Humboldt College and American River College at Citrus Heights near Sacramento. It was there that he received his Associate of Arts degree. He put himself through school by designing and making jewelry. He also panned gold in the American River and came up with "about 20 ounces."He's traveled all over the world including spending 14 days in Saudi Arabia, which he says was more than enough.

Steve has been working with his carving less than a year, yet they are stunningly beautiful. When did he become interested in working with glass? "Oh, God, a long time ago. I fooled around with stained glass through school art classes, but I never really got interested in it. I guess the first time was when I saw a crystal with the head of a lion carved inside the glass. I thought, I could do that. That's what I'm leading up to now."

Steve's work is very intricate and he likes to do birds and lovely ladies from long ago, although he has done a variety of subjects. Roses are popular as gifts and he even created a cat for the owner of one of Nevada's whorehouses. "My very first piece of glass was a light etching with philodendron leaves. I used brown and green pigment and tinted it really

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Every Facet of Glass *continued*

light." He gave it to a friend who still has it. "Every piece I do I learn a new lesson." He also received helpful hints from other people interested in glass that he says would have taken him two years to learn on his own.

Doing the drawings on paper that are eventually transferred to glass sometimes takes more time than the carving. Steve occasionally uses drawings provided by others as well a his own creations. He is working on a large Cockatoo that he says is not complete. "I do every feather in the bird. In each feather every ribbing in the wing shows up. I've been working on the Cockatoo for two months and it's not anywhere near done." Part of his problem is that he's a total perfectionist. "Sometimes I have an idea in my head and I'll do a drawing 50 times over. I draw with an eraser, I shade it. That's why I job out some of my drawings." This is not always sucessful because when he gets a drawing from someone he practically re-does it to his own specifications. "They're drawing in two dimensions and I'm drawing in three."

Steve's ladies have long flowing curls that show every hair. "The face is the most important part because that's where the eye goes first." He starts with the nose and the lines around the chin and mouth, then works other areas. He uses masking tape on the glass to mark off sections to be cut. He makes lacy borders by using a technique he calls chipping—he literally flakes off tiny pieces of glass. The appearance of his works with their arcs, squares, borders and minute detail is one of perfection, but he does not agree. "The glass I do is for a first impression look. In most art works people don't notice the mistakes because they didn't make them, but the artist always does because they're his." He does admit to one piece he considers perfect. "There's mistakes in everything except The Unicorn. There's nothing in that."

The Unicorn is done on a small mirror with a simple border. In certain light the flowing mane and tail take on a pale green cast due to the depth of the carving. It was a special order. "I went home and stayed up till two in the morning drawing it out and I finished it right away." When he's creating something he'd likely to work on it night and day.

The Unicorn is not the only mirror he has worked on. "I did a piece on a 50 year old mirror here and two antique dealers bought it. It was a mercury backed mirror and they're known to crack in an instant, but I'd traveled 1200 miles with it and it never cracked." Regardless of the value of the object he's working on Steve feels it's his work he's selling and not the background it may be on. However, his prices are remarkably reasonable - $100 to $200 dollars. "I really don't think it's worth more. I think people are way overpriced who charge more. I look at the piece of work when it's finished and I charge accordingly." He realizes that there is no amount of money that could pay for the hours spent on a piece. One of his most unusual creations is a small fairy. The glass is held upright in a slotted wood stand and is wired as a nightlight. When it is lit it glows with an iridescent color that is reminiscent of Tiffany.

Steve claims the art goes back some 3,000 years to the most primitive etchings. "They used to use a bellows with a foot pump to blast the sand through a line to make the cut. I'm still in the primitive stage as far as my equipment goes. When I'm using the sand the guy next door comes over and asks me if I'll blast his spark plugs." When he's working with the sand he has all the desert for a studio. "I work outside. I just sit on my porch on a five gallon bucket and blast away." The stark light is broken by a large Tamarisk tree where Belle sits in the shade to watch.

Right now Steve is using 90 grit silica sand that he gets for $6 per one

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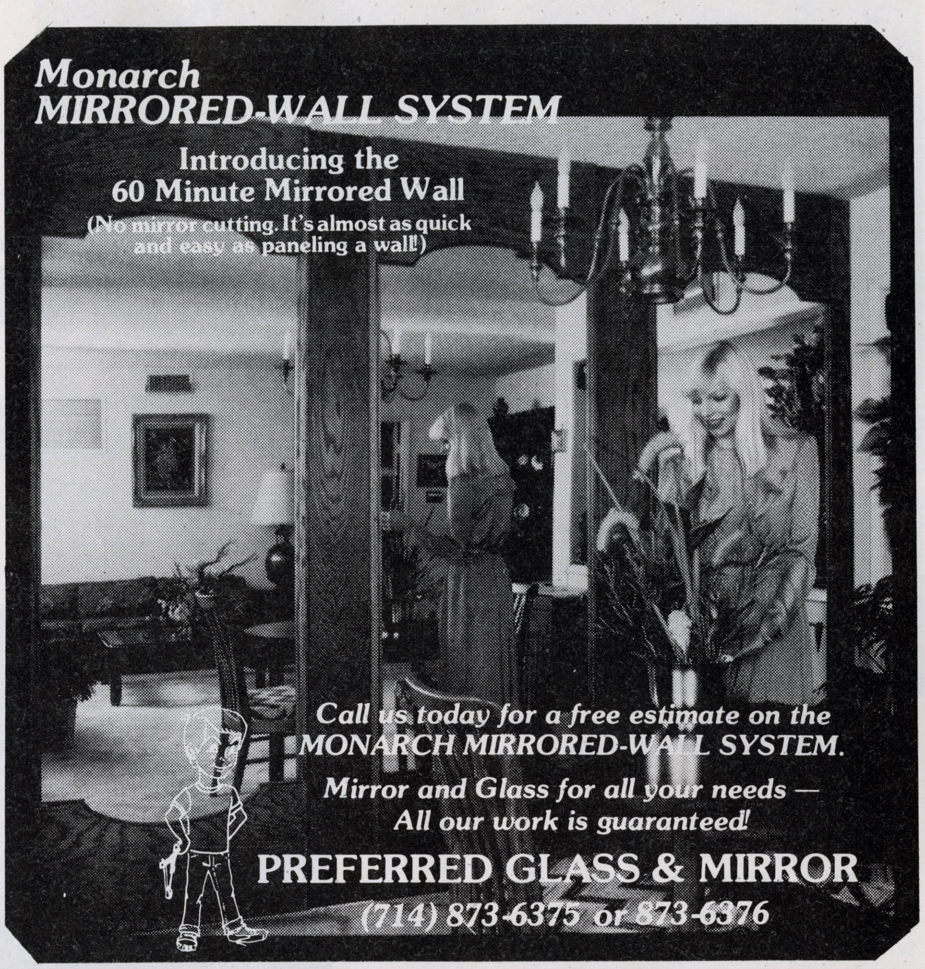
Every Facet of Glass *continued*

hundred pounds. He has to haul it al;l the way from Las Vegas. For his most recent work, the head of a woman patterned after Mucha, he used a little over one hundred pounds of sand. The sand is not re-useable. His equipment has a quarter inch opening and it takes great control to use only the edge of the blast to obtain the lines he likes. "People wonder how I do the fine work I do," he said. He'd like to use silica carbide sand, or Carborundum, but it costs $150 for a hundred pound sack and he would have to change all his tools and use a much finer orifice, perhaps down to a 32nd of an inch. The cost would be over one thousand dollars and at the present time he can't afford it.

Nevertheless, he is totally committed to his art. It will be his life's work, he says. "I'd like to open a shop and learn how to do bevelled glass and stained glass." He would also like to use the copper wheels that produce such a fine cut. He tried to show his work at the 1981 Death Valley 49er gathering but he was told he hadn't entered in time. So he set up a stand outside the area and sold out of everything he had brought. He also teaches his art, but he finds few students, no matter how talented, who have the patience to take the time he insists be put in on a piece. Some of them turn to etching which is much easier, while others try to persuade him to do less complex designs. He steadfastly refuses. "I don't want to do anything ordinary."

He doesn't have to worry. Whenever he opens Every Facet of Glass, the name he wants for his shop, it will be unique in the country. Until that time his work may be seen — sometimes — at Joe's Stateline Bar just north of Death Valley Junction. Or Steve can be contacted at P.O. Box 54, Death Valley, California 92328.

When I last saw him he was carefully making a silver and turquoise collar for Belle for Christmas. ■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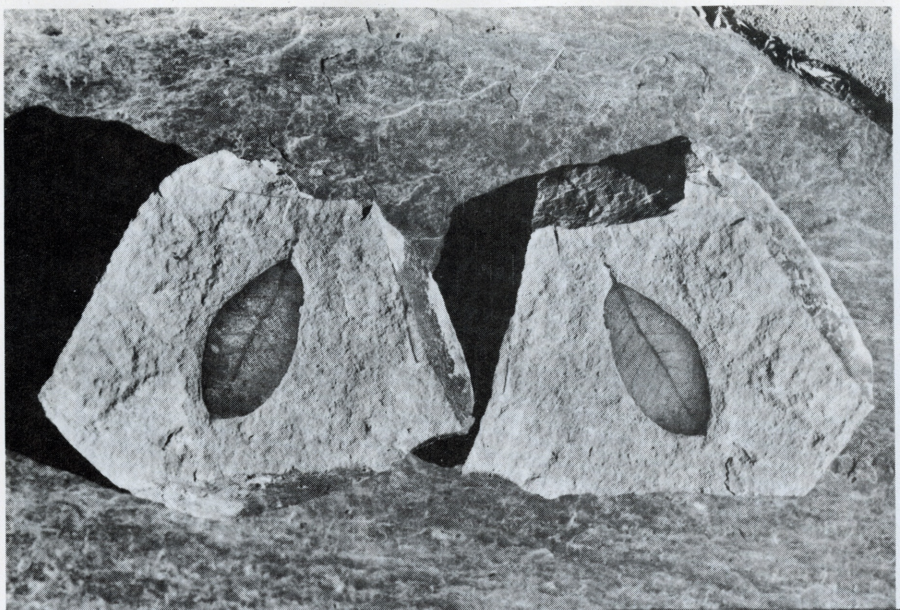
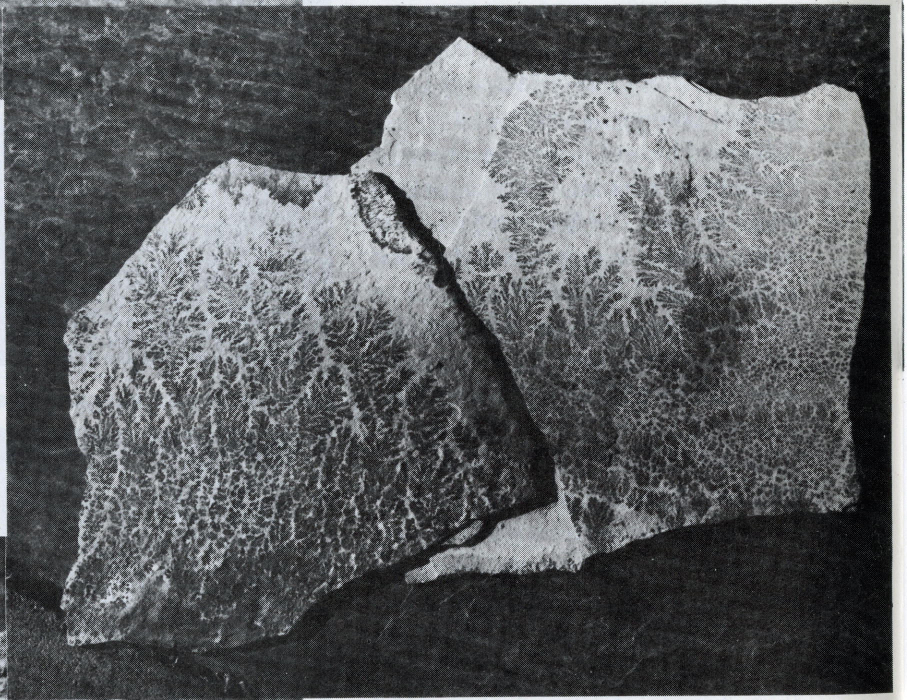
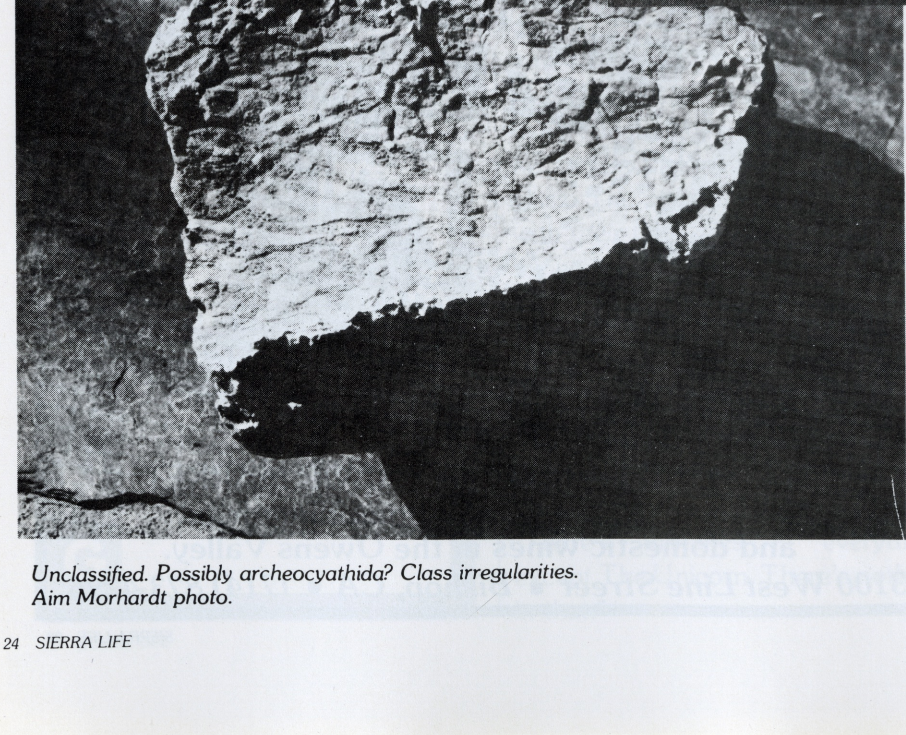


Miocene flora. Fingerrock Wash area (obverse and reverse . . . quercus). Aim Morhardt photo.

Manganese dendrites. Fingerrock Wash area. Aim Morhardt photo.





Unclassified. Possibly archeocyathida? Class irregularities. Aim Morhardt photo.

FOSSILS... are frustrating!

by J.E. "Aim" Morhardt

There are a number of interesting fossil areas in the Eastern Sierra and Western Nevada region. As is the case with semi-precious gem deposits it is appropriate to have a guide if one can be secured. Failing that, maps will have to be resorted to and it is at this point that frustration enters the picture.

Fossils are in most cases shy and retiring. Their color is usually very close to that of the rock enclosing them; their forms are seldom graphic. If you do find a bed, like as not you will need a charge of dynamite to do much collecting. Such detached specimens as are available are often heavy, especially the better ones, and should you try to break away the excess gangue material you will inevitably ruin the very choice creature you wish to save. Further, the locations are seldom accessible by car and what you collect increases in weight as the distance widens between you and your vehicle. Then to cap it all, when you return home and proudly display your spoils you will get little applause but rather remarks like these:

"I don't see anything!"

"You mean that's a fossil?"

"Don't leave it in here. Put it in your own room, it's only an old crummy piece of rock!"

This, of course, tends to deflate your enthusiasm. If you had brought back some nice quartz crystals or some pretty onyx the response might have been different. No, at best you must be content mainly with the quest and the satisfaction which comes in finding some remote precurser of a present bug where none knew it existed. Your friends will probably say that they had no idea there was anything like that around. In time you will acquire a modest library and show them with Latin names which seem appropriate such as; "Oh, yes, that's a rather fair speciman of Dimorphichnus", or perhaps a few polysyllabic phrases; "I don't know the taxonomy of this one but its ethological classification appears to be such and such." This can bring you kudos if you don't indulge in too much of it and you can be sure, at least, that your hearers will have no idea what you are talking about as the incidence of fossil familiarity is about zero.

That then, in something more than a nutshell is why fossils are frustrating, but fortunately the pursuit has some good points as well. It will get you out to places you have never visited, with only a rabbit or two for company, (and if that isn't a plus I don't know what is!); it will provide an avocation you can never outgrow; it pits you against Nature, an adversary who is always fair, and if you are lucky you might even find something new and different to amaze the professionals with. Furthermore it is good exercise and broadens the horizon, and with that preamble we come to the point at last, which is, WHERE, not why.

In the area adjacent to the Owens Valley we have some of the oldest rocks on earth. In fact the White Mountain range and the Inyos are composed largely of strata no more recent than lower Cambrian and extending back well into the Wyman preCambrian. Not that this necessarily makes for good fossilling as the preCambrian, by definition, is supposedly devoid of fossil evidence excepting the stromatolytic algae, and the lower Cambrian remains are

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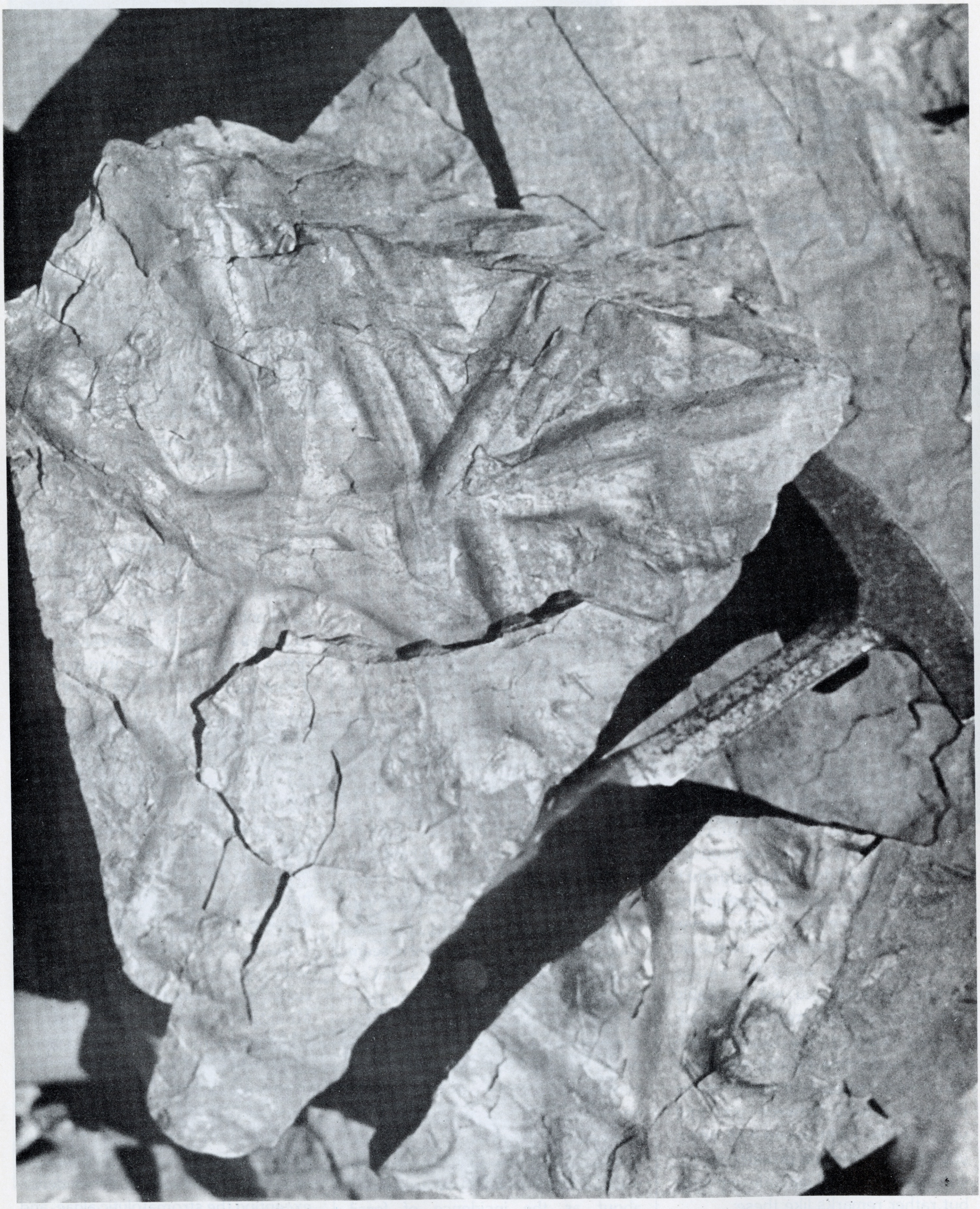

Trace fossils from the early Cambrian Era.
Aim Morhardt photo.

Fossils *continued*

somewhat scarce. Nevertheless, as one goes east into Nevada the stratigraphy broadens somewhat to include younger rocks and there are type localities on many horizons which are visited by paleo students from western colleges and universities, the closest and most popular one being on the Westgard Pass road on Cedar Flat. There, to the right of the paved road are numerous unpaved tracks which wander out towards the drop-off into lower Deep Springs Valley. Near this drop-off and below it for five or six hundred feet may be found a number of what are known as 'trace fossils'; sedimentary structures produced by the activity of organisms, including burrows, borings, feeding trails, nesting places, scratchings and the like, all of which merit names and serious study. One may also find partial carbon imprints of several of the earliest trilobites. In fact, the very oldest ever found comes from this area, (genus Fallotaspis) and with rare luck might be found in three dimensions. There are reefs of limestone containing abundant Archaeocyathids which superficially resemble certain corals. There are, as well, a number of other fossils whose names you won't remember. The Edrioasteroidea, Eocrinoidea and Helicoplacoidea and a few more. After all, you are more interested in finding just anything interesting than in classifying it.

As one leaves this area and descends on the paved road toward Deep Springs Valley the canyon cuts through the Andrews member of the Campito formation. This black schist is exposed from here to the base of the canyon and though there is no fossil evidence along the upper part of the road the lower levels provide prolific material, all of it trace fossils.

Since the specimens are virtually on the road one is sure of finding at least a talking piece. Not that you will be able to give it a name more conclusive than 'trace fossil' but you can explain that these rudimentary trails and burrows vaguely traced on the fracture surfaces of these dark rocks were made by shell-less organisms more than five hundred million years ago, which are, excepting the algae, the oldest signs of life on our planet.

The author was the discoverer of this particular site and has collected a number of specimens new to the region as well as one which bears his name: Vittichnus morhardti, n. sp.

A little farther along as the road leaves the canyon is a short spur road to the right which leads about a hundred yards to a borrow pit in a small draw. Looking up the draw one will note low rock faces on the left hand side. Here have been found a dozen or so of the smallist trilobite in the area, whose latin name I don't recall. These 3 D fellows are about the size of a house fly and exceedingly hard to spot being, as they are, of the same material as the country rock. However persistance may pay off as it has for me.

One more place in the general area might be of interest to some. It abounds in stressed oolitic lime. Although not properly fossil it is unusual and polishes well. It lies in the Wyman preCambrian. Anyone interested can contact me personally as it would be hard to put on a map.

There are other sites to be explored in this wonderful wilderness which will be covered in the following article. Those mentioned are the easiest of access and should be a good starting point for beginners and more advanced collectors as well.

MORE ON FOSSILS

If you are new to fossils don't expect too much. Nature is about as chary in their distribution as she is with mining locations. Just as prospectors have limited geologic conjunctions so too paleo searchers are confined to certain structures, all of them sedimentary, where heat has not destroyed the fossil traces. Certainly

(continued on next page)

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Fossils *continued*

there are vast expanses of these but in most areas you will find quite a restricted range of phyla. In our region of the Eastern Sierra and Western Nevada we are fortunate in having most of the older geologic units represented from preCambrian through Jurassic as well as a number of Tertiary exposures. This at least gives variety to what might be found, as a few hundred geology papers testify, but it does not mean that you, no matter how observing, can hit on the right places even with detailed information. In addition to that most fossils are small, fragmented, dull in color and in every way uninteresting. Rarely will you find a specimen to put on your coffee table for the astonishment of your friends. With the present network of transportation and communication you are more apt to measure your expectations against the best the world has to offer rather than in relation to what your area provides. We find fossil fish in a number of places throughout our backyard here but a whole one would be a great rarity and small at that, whereas the Green River formation in western Colorado produces gorgeous world-grade specimens which are sought internationally. One has only to attend a show such as the Gem and Minerals one hosted yearly at Tucson to marvel at the small number of localities which produce the kinds of fossils you see in book illustrations. Nonetheless the attraction of fossiling remains, as I pointed out earlier, so here are some more locations.

The second most interesting area after Cedar Flat is near the mouth of Mazurka Canyon due east of Independence. The road across the valley starts at the southern edge of town and goes straight over to the Inyo range where it makes a turn to the north before entering the canyon proper. At that point rudimentary tracks leading yet further east up the open wash will take you to within walking distance of the large spur of hill to your right which is your destination. If you have 4 wheel drive you can wind your way further to a point where the wash becomes a narrow canyon where you will be at the easternmost limits of the deposit which lies on the steep pitch just to your south. The material is in a medium grey sandy limestone and consists of a jumble of crinoid and coral fragments. Other phyla are there but are difficult to identify.

The organic forms have been replaced by a somewhat more silicious material than the original limestone and the appearance of any specimen may be greatly enhanced by immersing it in a weak solution of hydrochloric acid which will selectively attack the ground-mass, leaving the fossil fragments in high relief. Swimming pool grade muriatic is very good for this and you may wish to soak your items for a day or two. This deposit is very well known and readily identified. It can be pin-pointed on the Independence quad. USGS 1:62500 as being in the NE 1/4 of sect. 8, T13 S, R36 E. between Willow Springs canyon and Vaughn Gulch.

Mazourka Canyon has many other fossil localities as detailed in USGS Professional Paper 475B, art 21. by Ross, but only a professional paleo man can lead you to them. I have tried to track them down myself several times with absolutely no results. In fact, I have found that this is usually the case when I try to follow the experts. Either there are very few specimens, (which I really suppose to be the case) or I am not observing carefully enough. I am confining the sites in these articles to those easily identified by the amateur . . . although I confess he may not think so until he becomes accustomed to the routine. There are a number of other crinoid/coral assemblages in the Inyos but none as readily accessible and none more graphic. We shall have to go afield for our next objective which is in the Fingerrock Wash locale out of Mina, Nevada. (see map) This is a large area of eocene (Esmeralda fm.) lakebeds which contain world-grade leaves as well as imperfect fish fragments and an extended list of insects. The leaf source shown near Stewart Springs has, in the past, produced well for numerous university field trips but the available perfect specimens now seem to be mostly gone, necessitating pick and shovel work to uncover fresh material in the very limited area at the end of the spur road. By the way, don't look for signs on secondary or tertiary roads in Nevada as they are mostly missing. You will need a bit of ingenuity but then, why not? Otherwise it would be too easy!

There are numerous places throughout the area where fossils have been found and probably hundreds more yet to be uncovered. Any disturbance such as a shallow pit or out of place rocks may have produced something. World-grade insects as well as manganese dendrites on a par with the best German exist in the low hills just west of the wash. The dendritic material will require pick and shovel, the insects intense concentration and persistence. These latter occur almost entirely in areas of very thin varves, (leaves). Sometimes one gets both obverse and reverse of a leaf, fish or insect by carfully splitting them.

This area should only be visited in late summer or autumn when it is quite dry as the lakebed clays are unworkable when wet and the road often impassible. The site marked non-marine opalized mollusca is a bed of small snails right on the road at the last place for some distance that there is a hillside cut on the right. If the outer limestone shells are dissolved in HCl they may be rather decorative. About one half mile east of the road the specimens are better.

Another location which has produced interesting material, and one that I do not think is known at all is out of Luning, some eight miles north of Mina. Go east across the lakebed anyway you choose then follow the map, which, though not completely accurate, being from memory, will

(continued on next page)

Fossils *continued*

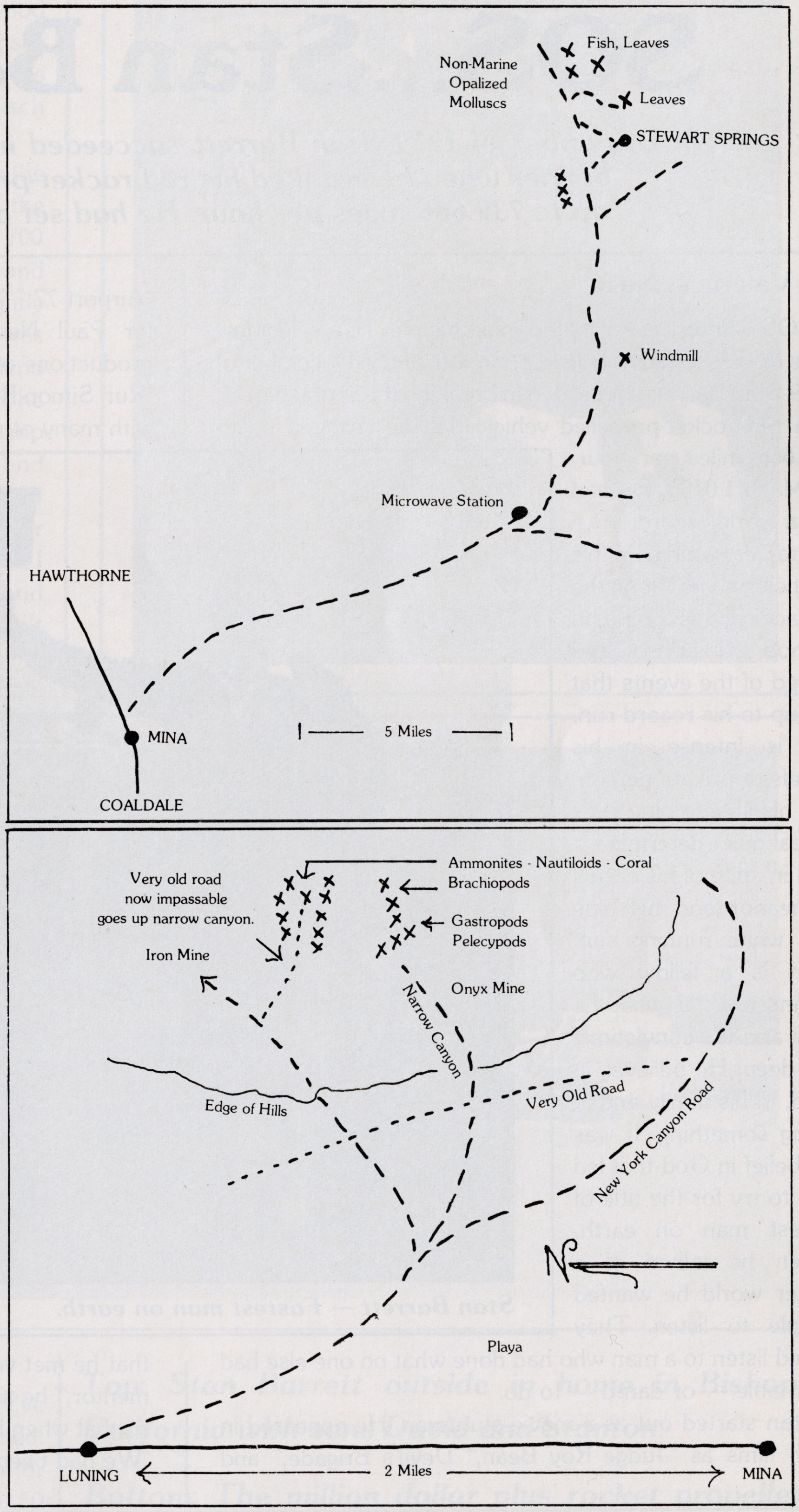
get you there. As there are only three up-canyon roads you can't get lost. Some of this material is well color differentiated and the ammonite fragments, of which there are two kinds, one, dark bas-reliefs on beige flat sandstone fragments, the other 3D in black in a grey gangue, are quite well-formed; and decorative. I have taken friends there three or four times and we have always found something but I imagine it will be soon worked out if it gets much traffic. Don't expect a stroll in the park here as it is in large part steep and the footing is bad.

While I have researched the literature, followed many blind leads, and can point out personally a dozen other collecting sites, there are but two more which I really find interesting. One is on the south-west side of Miller Mt. on Route 6 about eight miles past Montgomery Pass. After you pass the entrance to the Grefco diatomite mine on the right watch for a graded dirt road to the left, (there is only one). Turn on it and stop anywhere before it enters the canyon. In the alluvial fan you will find sparse boulders of a red-brown color. On the surface of some you may be fortunate enough to discover the intaglio imprints of lower Cambrian trilobites with a different character. To be technical, they are Ogygopsis batis. (Walcott) as well as Olenellus and Paedeumias. (Poor things with such names!) These originate up-canyon where the material, an argillaceous hornfels, is in place, but that takes 4 wheel and someone from Tonopah has it under claim.

It is possible to take Fingerrock, Luning and Miller Mt. together on one trip. I should suggest an overnight camp if you do. Either of the first two will provide suitable dry camps, but Fingerrock lacks wood.

The other site mentioned above is too far away to fit in with my boundaries. I know there must be other collecting areas nearby but I have been unable to find any. These however, will either give you the bug, or not. Happy hunting. ■

Sierra Nevada Fossil Hunting Areas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COALDALE
Ammonites - Nautiloids - Coral
Brachiopods
Very old road now impassable goes up narrow canyon.
Gastropods
Pelecypods
Iron Mine
Onyx Mine
Narrow Canyon
Edge of Hills
Very Old Road
New York Canyon Road
N
Playa
LUNING
2 Miles
MINA

SOS...Stan Barrett

In December of 1979 Stan Barrett succeeded in breaking the sound barrier when he cranked his red rocket-propelled vehicle up to 739.666 miles per hour. He had set a world record.

by Valerie J. Naso

SOS is a distress signal to most people. To a select few race drivers it means Speed of Sound, and in December of 1979 Stan Barrett succeeded in breaking the sound barrier in a red rocket-propelled vehicle that he cranked up to 739.666 miles per hour, or Mach 1.0106. He had set a world record.

Stan is young, in his thirties, and he sat on the terrace of his home in Bishop, California and talked of the events that led up to his record run. He is intense in his beliefs, a private person, but his steady blue eyes reveal quiet determination in spite of his casual demeanor and his blue and white running suit. Stan is a fellow who means exactly what he says and his convictions are deep. He believes in God, in his family and in doing something. It was his belief in God that led him to try for the title of fastest man on earth. When he talked of a better world he wanted people to listen. They would listen to a man who had done what no one else had been able — or dared — to do.

Stan started out as a movie stuntman. He appeared in such films as "Judge Roy Bean," Devil's Brigade," and "Airport 77," "Hooper," "Canonball," and he has doubled for Paul Newman. He has been seen in television productions of "Dan August," "Sam Whiskey," "Hondo," "Run Simon Run," "Mod Squad," and "Gunsmoke," along with many other shows. He doubled for Burt Reynolds in the movie "Hooper." Nothing special. All he had to to do was slide a motorcycle under a moving tractor trailer and into a car. Said Stan, "It's a job to me. The element of danger makes you feel a little bit differently about it. Sliding the bike under the trailer was not fun." Was he afraid? "Fear is a healthy thing unless you let it incapacitate you in some way. I have a lot of respect for some things (he prefers the word respect to fear). I'm not going to fool around with a rattlesnake, just like I'm not going to fool around with a lot of things that would be potentially harmful to my family or my health."

Stan Barrett — Fastest man on earth.

It was while he was working in Hollywood that he met veteran stuntman Hal Needham. "He was my mentor," he said simply. Stan wanted to do something big so that when he talked of Christianity people would listen. "We had been praying for a broader platform for our faith

. . . When he talked of a better world he wanted people to listen. They would listen to a man who had done what no one else had been able — or dared — to do.

and to graduate from being a stuntman. When Hall called me we sort of felt that this was the answer to our prayers." Stan says "we" a lot. "I hate saying "I"". As far as I'm concerned "we" is my family and God. It takes a lot of the pressure off." He leaned forward on the wood bench of his large terrace. "I got the sponsor (Budweiser) through Paul Newman. He races and he introduced me to the Anheuser Busch people."

They first tried to make the speed run on the famed Bonneville Salt Flats, but when the ground proved unsuitable for speeds over 700 miles per hour he turned to the Air Force and Rogers Dry Lake, an arid location slightly north east of Lancaster, California. Stan was aware of the danger involved; he had a friend who had crashed at Mud Lake in 1975. Still, he was determined. "I've never been one to jump into anything. I wouldn't have gone out and made one run for the sound barrier, I made 18 before it was successful." His gaze never wavers, even in the bright afternoon sun. "If I hadn't thought it was an excellent project and we had a good chance of doing it you couldn't have coerced me into that vehicle for anything. The project was in God's hands. The whole crew were Christians. It was a very well thought out, well planned, well prayed project. I think there had to be a balance of all three."

Stan had support all the way. "I felt I was in God's hands and whatever happened God would be glorified in it. If my wife hadn't felt the same way there would have been no peace in it." His wife Penny is a former ski racer and he says "she knows a lot about competition and danger and commitment." But it must have been hard on her to watch her husband strapped into the long nosed red monster that shot orange flame out the 48,000 horsepower rear engine when he put his foot to the floor.

Was he afraid when he made the run? "I've been more afraid of doing stunts," he admitted. That may be because there wasn't room for fear. The entire run lasted less than 50 seconds. "The danger factor is so high — we came off the ground when we hit Mach 1 — the rear wheels were about 10 or 12 inches off the

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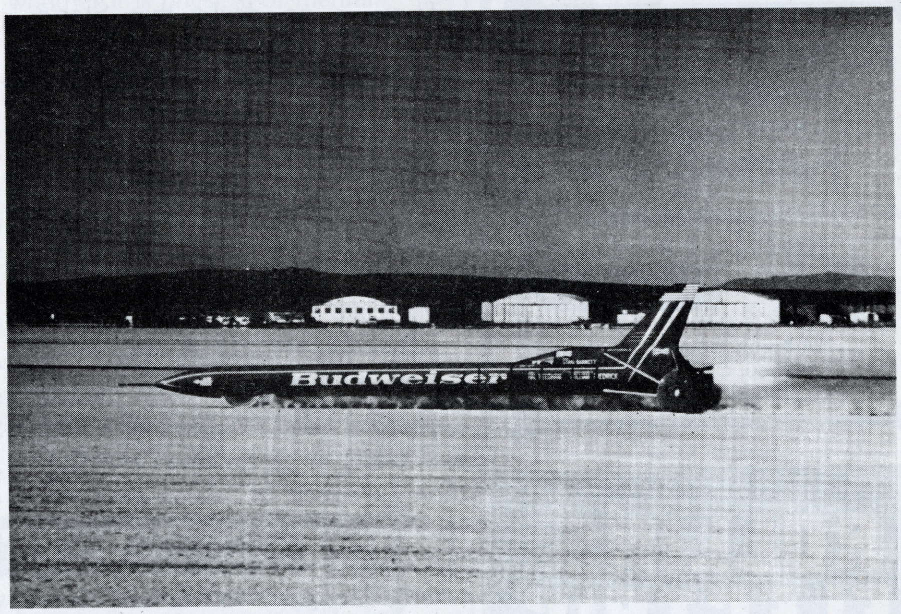

Top: Stan Barrett outside in home in Bishop, California with sons David and Stanton.

Bottom: The million dollar plus rocket propelled vehicle Stan drove to set the world record.

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***Stan Barrett** continued*

ground." Stan said he thought the chances of surviving such a thing were one in a million, though he credits NASA officials with saying it is one in 10,000. "The ground shook for two miles and the noise was incredible. I mean grown men were out there crying about it." He says it was so awesome that he couldn't take time to think about it. "I crashed at Daytona at 185 miles per hour and that's the same sort of thrill. The anticipation of death is never a thrill to me."

> ***"Records are only as good as what you use them for. A broken record has no value unless it can be used for something important.". . . "Unless I can do it for something besides money it wouldn't be worth the risk I was taking."***

There is no doubt that Stan's motives were the highest. "Records are only as good as what you use them for. A broken record has no value unless it can be used for something important." He grinned at his own pun. "Unless I can do it for something besides money it wouldn't be worth the risk I was taking."

Even this superman had his problems. Some church people apparently failed to realize what Stan was trying to do for them and they took exception to having the name Budweiser on the rocket craft. "I don't feel a man's spirituality is judged by whether he has a beer or not," Stan said. Besides, somebody had to foot the bill for over a million dollars spent for the vehicle. Nevertheless, he wouldn't endorse the beer because he felt it might be a stumbling block for somebody else. By refusing he lost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Bud went ahead and made a commercial anyhow. "It puts a sponsor in a kind of a bad place if they can't really use you. They made a commercial because it's their right to use the film and I hadn't expected that."

Would he want to try for another record? "There's no reason to do it again. That would be like saying to God, "I'm not satisfied with the platform you gave me."

So what does a man who has accomplished such a record do now. He still races, though he confines himself to stock cars now. "I raced Grand National and I won rookie of the race at Daytona and Riverside this year. I finished in the top ten." However, he had some setbacks and too much money was spent. Also, he wouldn't endorse Skoal Chewing Tobacco, a sponsor. Because of these things he was dropped from the team. He freely admits that a sponsor needs the drivers' endorsement. "If you can't give it to them you shouldn't be driving," he said. "But peace of mind means a good deal more than money." In racing, however, if you don't make money it's just a hobby.

Stan could have gone into second unit film directing and he has not turned his back on the movie industry. "I may still do it if I find a vehicle that says what I want. I like certain aspects of making films, but I don't like what has happened to the motion picture business. Or maybe I wasn't aware of the contents of films until I became a dedicated Christian. The contents are scary and it's very upsetting to me." Stan claims that movies without sex and violence can do well and believes that critics ought to look to "Chariots of Fire" (the story of Eric Ladell, the Flying Scotsman) as an example of wholesome entertainment.

> ***"Films are just a reflection of what's going on in people's lives . . . They say they're just telling it like it is, but you don't have to have cancer to know you don't want it."***

"Films are just a reflection of what's

continued on next page

going on in people's lives. Divorce is rampant and drug use is terrible. They say they're just telling it like it is, but you don't have to have cancer to know you don't want it." He believes that a positive message is more important and that young people should see films that show people who do not steal and use drugs and jump from one bed to another. "I've started some scripts but I've never really had the time to follow through on it. I'm no longer interested in the things I once was." He says the first thing he'd shoot would be "Lords of the Earth," a story about a missionary to Dutch New Guinea. "If it's done right I wouldn't worry about it. It wouldn't matter whether it broke even or lost money. If it reached even one person it would be a success. God never did measure success in dollars."

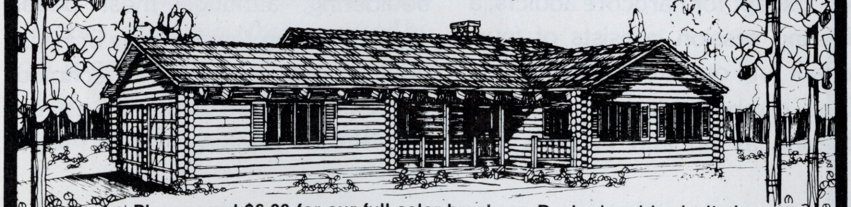
Stan bought himself a camera but he usually ends up doing things that are sports related instead of taking pictures. Oddly enough, he has no desire to photograph sporting events. "I'm not a watcher of anything, really. I'd rather go out and do it." As for those photos, well, he'd prefer to take pictures of mountains and flowers and trees, what he calls "God's handiwork."

the important thing for Stan is that God's image is glorified. He says that his own image is unimportant except in that it reflects his efforts on behalf of Christianity. "A lot of people are not going to like statements you make, but I didn't make up the rules. Sin is sin; we're all sinners. The one thing about being a Christian is that you're forgiven."

Stan's life is varied. He has appeared in Billy Graham's crusade in Houston, Texas. He did a film for Graham and has been in several national television specials dealing with Christianity. He also devotes some time to speaking in churches. "What I do depends on whether we're racing or making appearances. It depends on the time of the year. I work out, I run, I box. I try to spend as much time studying the Bible and being with my family as I can." He has two sons and a daughter. David is ten, Stanton is nine, and Melissa is seven. They ski together, run, pray, play and travel together, though Stan is not crazy about traveling. "I like to be at home with my family. The Holy Land is the only place I want to go."

His sense of purpose is so strong that you can feel the vibrations. "There are so many important things to be done. I think I should be preparing myself for whatever challenge God puts there for me, whether it is physical or mental."

Stan believes in strong commitment, to God and family, study and growth. He even jokes that you'd better be careful what you pray for, you might get it. But when he talks of the future it is with a certain amount of caution. "I always use the excuse that after going 700 miles per hour, it's hard to slow down and it's taken me several years." But Stan is a man to be reckoned with and when he says there's a lot to be done in the world, it's a good bet he'll be out there doing it. ■



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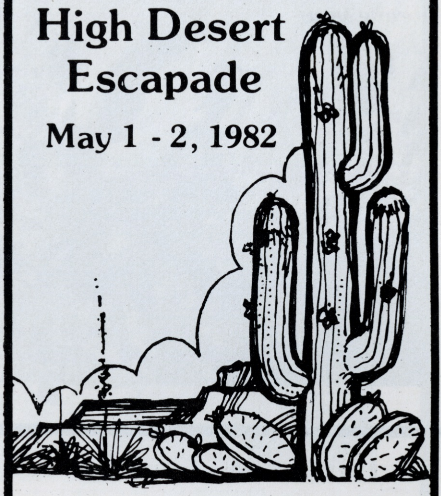

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BOULDERING

. . . go climb a rock in Buttermilk

by Hank Levine

Buttermilk country is located west of Bishop, adjacent to the Tungsten Hills and the Owens Valley. The rock there is actually part of the Sierra Nevada Batholith. The earthquake faults that run along the base of the Tungsten Hills are less active than the faults at the base of the mighty Sierran escarpment, resulting in considerably less vertical movement. The more weathered texture is a result of the lower desert environment. It is here that practitioners of an extreme form of climbing regularly train.

Bouldering is a physical art which requires years of practice to perfect techniques, coordination, flexibility and muscle development. Ballet dancing and gymnastics have many similarities; graceful body movements, delicate stances and tremendous muscle control. Bouldering differs only in that the maneuvers are performed on a vertical stage.

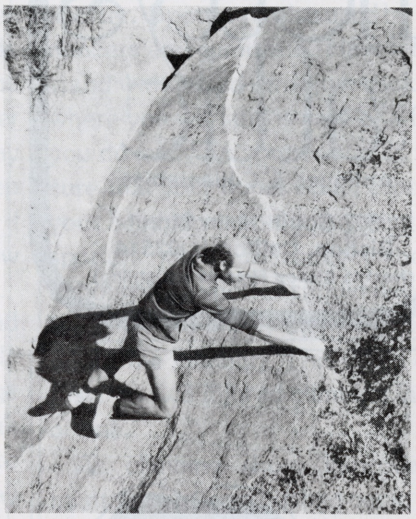
As in other sports, climbers boulder for a variety of reasons. Some people boulder purely for the workout which requires the use of nearly every muscle in the body including the brain.

Others use bouldering as a way of relieving everyday tensions. Probably one of the most common reasons for bouldering is the informal socializing that often centers around bouldering areas. Except for hardcore addicts, a bouldering session consists of four-fifths talk and one-fifth training.

Most climbers do not consider bouldering as an end in itself, but rather as a way of improving strength and refining techniques for roped climbing. This is not always the case, as some of the country's best boulderers don't do "real" climbing.

The only real requirement for bouldering is a rock of sufficient shape, size and quality. An ideal boulder is around fifteen feet high with a variety of flake, dish and crack sizes and is composed of solid rock. A variety of hand and footholds will allow for an equal variety of difficulties and techniques.

Any type of shoe will work for bouldering, although most people start out using tennis shoes or hiking boots. As a person's technique develops, it is wise to invest in a pair of specialized climbing shoes, which



come in two basic styles. One looks like a high-topped basketball shoe, except for the smooth sole which has tremendous friction capabilities. The second style looks like a light weight hiking boot. The design of the second style makes it rigid enough to stand on edges that are barely visible to the human eye. Both styles should be worn as tight as ballet slippers. This tightness is needed to avoid foot movement inside the shoe, which could cause your foot to slip off a foothold.

Most people who climb regularly (at least three times a week) develop ebbytoes, a toe injury that is caused by tight shoes.

Just as in working the rings or uneven parallel bars, sweaty hands

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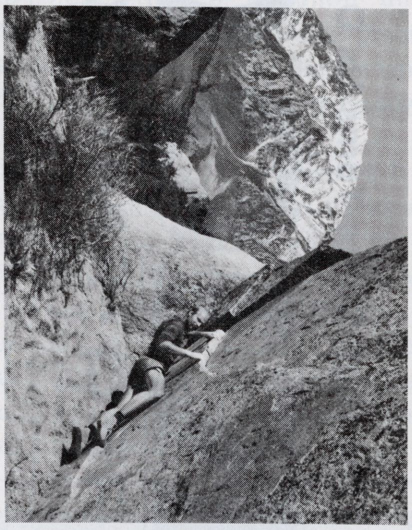

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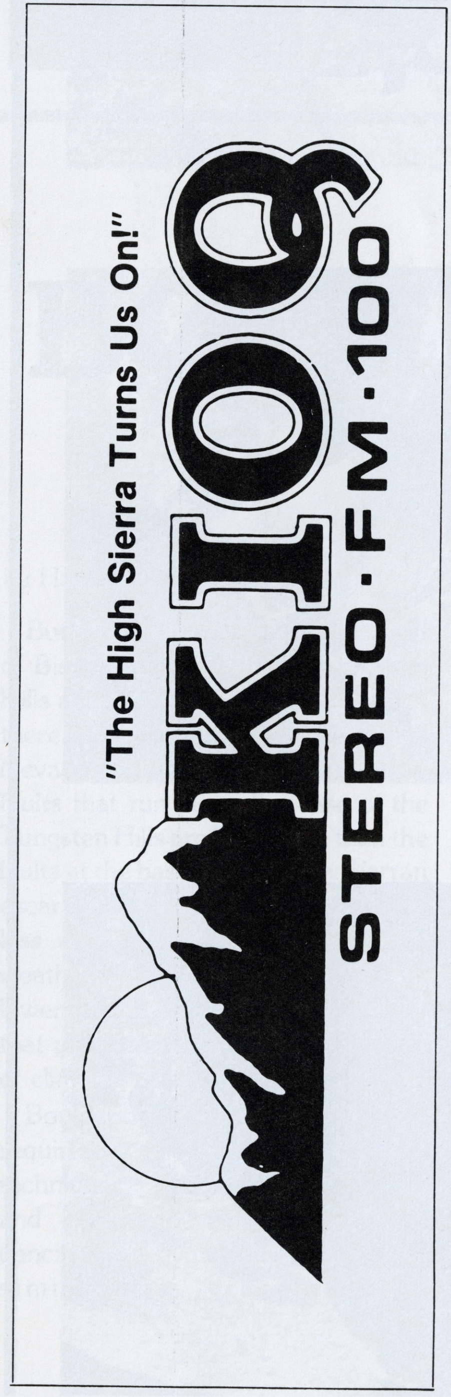
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Bouldering *continued*

can be very dangerous when executing hard moves, therefore gymnast's chalk is often used to dry off damp hands. Before you go out and use chalk though, you should be aware that its use is highly controversial. There is little question as to whether chalk helps prevent hands from slipping on small holds on warm afternoons, but there are questions as to chalk's aesthetic values. Some chalk is absorbed by sweaty hands, but most of it is deposited on the handholds, leaving what climbers call "visual pollution." Once you have tried chalk it is hard not to use it all the time. The result is that large "bombproof" holds get coated white and at times become a cakey mess. Chalk is psychologically addictive. Pro- and anti-chalk users have exchanged more than heated words. Think very carefully before using chalk for the first time.

The only other equipment a boulderer might need is a rope, which is used when the boulders are very high or the landings (when you fall or jump off) are bad. Ropes positively must be used properly and be made especially for climbing. Don't think that if you can rope a steer you can safely use the same rope to protect a climber. A human life is worth much more than that of a steer.

Technically speaking there is little difference between bouldering and roped rock climbing. The movements are all the same, but bouldering brings climbing down to its most simplistic form. There are no nuts, carabiners, pitons, bolts, hammers, ropes, hammocks, jumars or haul bags to think about. The only thing you need to concentrate on is where to place your hands and feet and how to keep them there once placed. It is much easier to learn and then perfect new techniques while five feet off the ground, than it is when you are twenty-five hundred feet off the ground. When bouldering, the falling fear factor is removed, allowing for one hundred percent effort both physically and mentally. Many climbers will work on an extreme boulder problem for months, falling off an infinite number ot times, before they can successfully complete the required sequence.

> ***". . . in addition to the great abundance and size of the holds, the Buttermilks are covered with gravel, which makes good landing pads when falling or jumping off of a problem."***

The Buttermilks offer many good, sound boulders for climbing on; in fact the Buttermilks are considered one of America's premier bouldering areas. The granitic rock is blessed with many flake and dish formations that serve as hand and footholds. To compensate for this overabundance of holds, nature neatly provided boulders that overhang on all sides. If they didn't overhang, climbing up on such large holds would be easy and therefore no problems would exist. In addition to the great abundance and size of the holds, the Buttermilks are covered with gravel, which makes good landing pads when falling or jumping off of a problem.

The two biggest drawbacks to bouldering in the Buttermilks are that the rock is sharp and the boulders large. With a regular workout schedule, calluses will soon build up on your hands, but for the occasional

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Bouldering *continued*

climber, expect sore, swollen fingers. Because the boulders have large holds, there is a tendency to climb higher off the ground than you first intended. This sometimes results in an uncomfortable decision as to whether climbing to the top, downclimbing or jumping is safer.

The climate of the Owens Valley allows for nearly year round bouldering. During the heat of summer, after the sun has settled behind the lofty Sierra Nevada, there is still one hour of light accompanied by near perfect temperatures. During the spring and fall months, the midday sun provides enough heat to keep bouldering enjoyable. Besides the near perfect climate, the fantastic array of 13,000 foot peaks located both in the Sierra Nevada and White Mountains makes for a spectacular backdrop. With all of this it is easy to understand why Bishop is called home by so many climbers.

Learning how to boulder is easy. As children we had natural tendencies which made climbing easy, but those tendencies are easily lost after years of living in a horizontal world. Starting with somone who knows how to climb is always best, but because bouldering is so simple, teaching yourself also works. Bouldering is very much like climbing up a ladder, only the holds on a boulder may be smaller, not as evenly spaced and the easiest way is not necessarily taken. When bouldering on less than vertical rock, stand as perpendicular to the ground as possible. This will keep weight over your feet and off your arms. Stay close to the ground. This will keep anxiety levels low and is much safer if you fall. Everyone, no matter how good he is, falls while bouldering.

Trust your footholds; you can stand on holds that look exceedingly small. Only experience will help you judge what your shoes can stay on. Don't get frustrated. Climbers tend to "wire" a boulder problem. They may have fallen off the problem fifty times before they did it right, but once the sequence is figured out, the problem may look easy. The boulder problems in the Buttermilks are very strenuous. Stick with it and your muscles will soon start to develop. Before trying a boulder problem, make sure there is an easy way down. There is nothing worse than struggling up a problem only to find that you have just climbed up the easiest way down.

As good as bouldering is for your body, it has a few drawbacks. As techniques and strengths increase, there is a tendency to climb higher off the ground, which may result in longer falls. One way to protect against possible bodily injury is to use a spotter. Spotting is also used by ballet dancers and gymnasts. Have a friend stand with raised arms just back from where you will land is case of a fall. If you do fall, your spotter should make sure that your upper body, especially your head, does not hit anything. The spotters job is to redirect the fall, although the spotter should never try to break the fall by standing directly under the climber. This could easily result in two injured climbers instead of one.

As climbing shoes improve and mental limites are pushed back, there is more physical stress placed on the body. This has resulted in torn finger ligaments, a common ailment experienced by extreme practicioners. It appears that the human body may be the limiting factor on how hard problems can get.

Bouldering is a great sport! It taxes the whole body, allows the escape of everyday tensions, allows for quick improvements and is a great way to visit with your friends. Because of the superb rock quality, climate and views, the Buttermilks rightly deserve the fine worldwide reputation they have. ■

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Peggy Gray *continued*

mother made her keep a diary, setting the stage for her diligent sketch book recording later.

"I was eight years old," Peggy recalls. "They were sort of skimpy diaries, but even then I was adding little line drawings."

Painting is a serious, exciting and constant occupation for her. "Teaching and painting are not so different but it is hard work because I am spread so thin. When I'm giving a class, I'm not doing any important painting of my own - it wouldn't be fair. I give demonstrations and after the students are gone, maybe I'll try to finish them, and maybe I've forgotten." The time has come to do something about that.

"I took the year off from school to learn to paint better. The kids laughed, but it has really helped me. Having so many ideas I was unable to implement was very frustrating. Now I can work on some of them. It has taken so long to learn to interpret mountains, for instance. I am interested in being an interpreter, not a literal painter."

If she could be a famous artist, Mrs. Gray would have the attitude of Renoir, his way of seeing color and his atmosphere. She admires Goya's intellectual outlook on war and life and the strong light and dark values in his drawings and paintings.

"My work is not like theirs - they are just painters I like - Renoir for color, Goya for value. I'd like to be somewhere in between. I've been impressed by others - Georgia O'Keefe, Hokusai and his thirty-six views of Mt. Fugi - I don't even have ten of Mt. Tom!

"I don't call myself an artist. I am a painter. Michelangelo was an artist.

"I don't like the idea that painters have to say a lot about their work. It gets too involved. I like to help people see things in a new way. We often see things in a new way because of a painting. Although there is something to be seen almost anywhere, the unpracticed eye won't always see it, but the painter can make it visible and vivid. I want to call attention to the fast disappearing landscapes."

Peggy Gray's continual work at recording and interpreting landscapes is collected in sketch books as engrossing as any set of diaries. Trees, cascades, rock forms, the essence of a mountain scene are captured in a few lines. During travels in Europe, she carried art markers and large sketch books. These are filled with fine perspectives from high windows, across waters, up and down steep country roads, and at close quarters. Mystical castles, tile roofs, lacy ironwork and intricately elaborate churches are caught in elegant, somber olive greens grays and Spanish orange.

When she backpacks, she cuts Bristol paper to fit a pack pocket and encloses the resulting sketch book in a ziplock bag to keep it close at hand and dry.

"Although," she laughs, "I have had some unexpected washes and splash effects from a sudden mountain rainstorm."

No matter where she travels or what the weather, Peggy draws regularly. It is from this sketch material that she paints her watercolors: ethereal, magical, recognizable interpretations of the landscapes she cherishes.

Peggy, the person, is just a little magical. Along with her quiet strength, there is an illusively fey quality about her expression of constant amazement, often slightly squinting as though expecting the commonly unseen to appear momentarily. All soft browns and grays, she has a crooked, melting smile, large, graceful hands and a clear, sweet voice with strangely graveled vowels.

Her class is a supportive community, reflecting her attitude of reinforcement. She constantly nurtures: encouraging, demonstrat-

(continued on next page)

Peggy Gray *continued*

ing, full of intense concentration and unflagging interest in each student's work.

"Everyone is very interesting and beautiful and individual when you draw them, as though you never really saw them before," she tells a class drawing live models.

"I can remember where everything goes," someone remarks. "I just can't put it there." She responds immediately with help.

The evening ends with magazine model clippings handed out for sketching assignments.

"Try to draw from them," she says. "Perfect people aren't as interesting as the rest of us, but that's o.k."

Paintings by Peggy Gray have been exhibited throughout Bishop, at the Minaret Galleries in Mammoth Lakes, the Walker Gallery in Reno, the San Gabriel Fine Arts Association Gallery, and Smith College Art Gallery, and in various juried exhibitions. Her brush and India ink drawing, *Cottonwood II,* is one of thirty-nine out of three hundred aspirants accepted for showing by the Third Annual Women's National Exhibition in Washington, D.C. at Galerie Triangle.

Sierra Painting Workshops are Peggy's special combination of high country experience and on-location painting. Besides weeks in the mountains by horseback and pack mule, she offers two-week workshops with field trips in Inyo and Mono Counties, weekend classes in outdoor sketching and watercolor technique, and other painting classes in the mountains, beside lakes and in historic ghost towns. Brochures for this June, July and August are available at Bishop Chamber of Commerce of 373 Mt. Tom Road, Bishop, CA 93514.

"I feel particularly fortunate to be able to live in one of the earth's more scenic spots," says Peggy Gray. She is willing to share that beauty and her talent with those who care to call. ■

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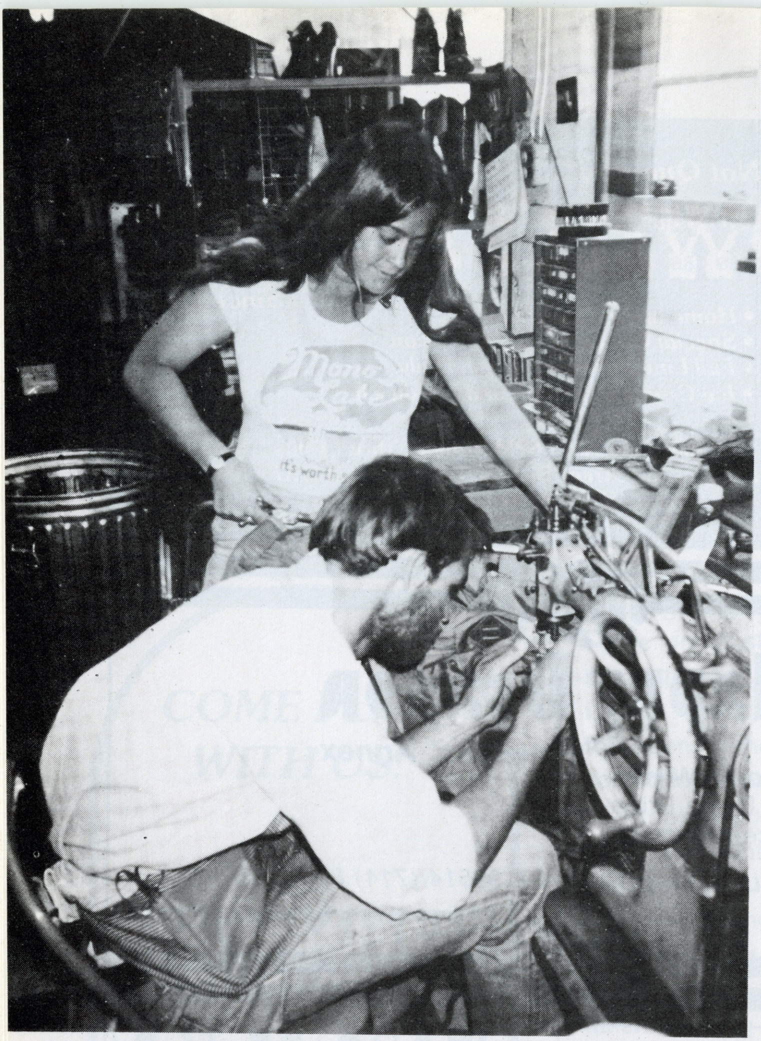
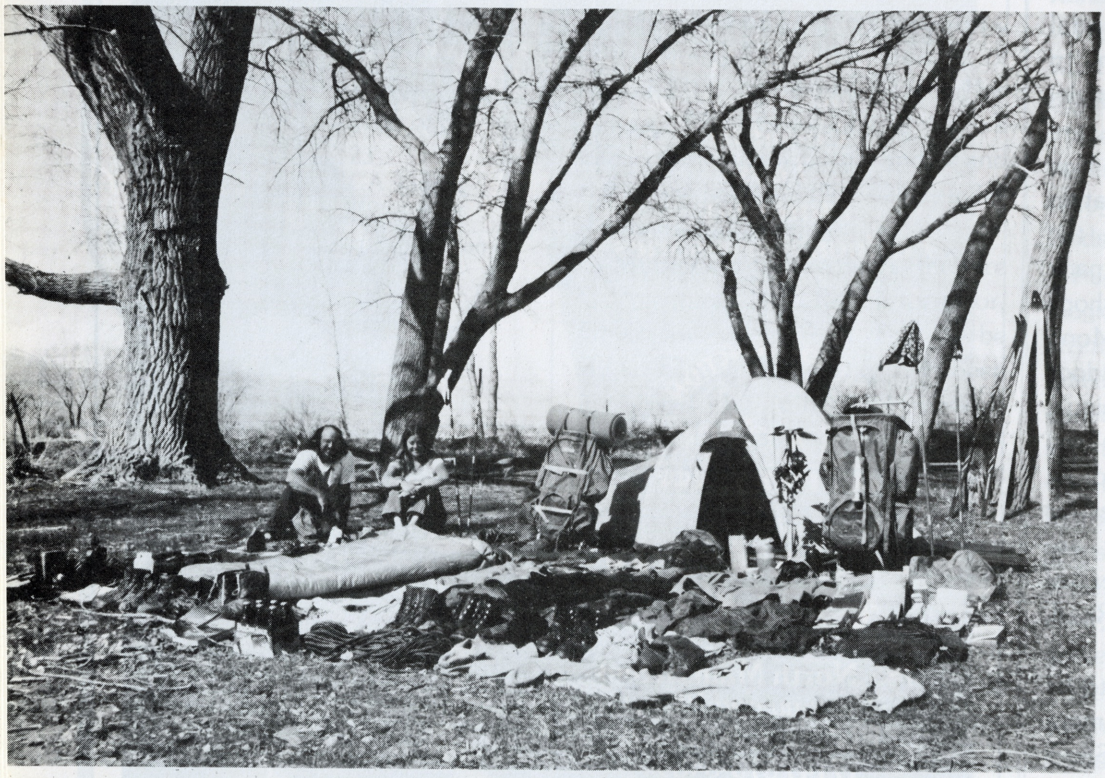


Linda Hayward has equipment repairs made at Wheeler's Boot Repair in Bishop before leaving on the trip.

Robert Elliott preparing the many packages of food necessary for the long journey.



A display of equipment that will be used during the 2800 mile hike. Robert and Linda are shown in background.

Hiking the PCT

The edited notes from the journal of Robert Elliott.

Each spring nearly five hundred brave souls start out to hike the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mexican border to Canada — fifty of these people succeed.

Linda Hayward and Robert Elliott of Bishop, California began this 2800 mile trek recently — we think they will make it.

Sierra Life is covering their trip through Robert Elliott's journal which will be sent to us from various points during the seven month journey.

Following are the first pre-trip entries into the journal.

February 19, 1982

Yesterday it began. My first step on the Pacific Crest Trail. It was a bit more than a step, actually, but when one considers the length of the entire journey, yesterday's walk seems inconsequential. We began at Jawbone Canyon at 8:00 a.m. Seven hours and twenty-two miles later we reached my Volkswagon at the Safeway parking lot in Mojave.

A reasonably intelligent person will ask, "What is this aimless wandering through the desert?" I wish I had a reasonably intelligent answer, but all I can manage is a shrug and a vague, "Well, ya see, Linda says we should get these desert sections out of the way now, before it gets too hot . . ." My voice tends to trail off weakly as I stand there with my eyes averted, a sheepish grin, and another shrug. How's that for asserting my right to walk through the desert along U.S. 14 between two hole-in-the-wall places?

I expect I'm going to be forced to answer the question sooner or later so I will attempt it now. I have been invited by Linda (I don't even know her last name yet) to walk from Mexico to Canada over the next seven months.

Linda, Les and I were soaking at Hot Ditch, south of Bishop, one Sunday evening. As I remember, Linda suddenly asked, "Robert, would you like to do the PCT with us? We seem to be pretty compatible."

"You know, I just might be able to do that. Let me give it some thought," I said.

After we adjourned to Les and Linda's for beer and homemade pizza, I heard more details. Food for the trip would run about $900. The airfares for three flights would cost about $450. I would have to come up with some money pretty quick. If I could sell my friend, Gene, one of my vehicles and combine the money with my income tax return . . .

Then came the anguish. Do I dare to try it? Do I dare to quit my job to do it? How will I tell my parents?

With thoughts of J. Alfred Prufrock running through my brain, I decided to investigate the possibilities. I went to see Gene, sold him the VW, and that was one hurdle. Another question concerned my apartment. More inquiries, still pending.

I went back and told Linda I thought I would go.

The parents! I know my folks have spent the last ten years wondering when I was ever going to grow up and what I was going to do when I did. I called my sister first, as a Litmus test.

"You're going to *fly* to places to start some sections?" "Who's going to take care of your cat?" Good old Sandy. The next night I called home.

"You're going to quit your job?" my mother wailed. I am going now, come hell or high water.

Two weeks ago, Linda and Les had driven down to Acton and hiked from there to Lancaster in a day. The day before yesterday, they hiked from Lancaster to Mojave. They had two legs already out of the way when I met them in Mojave. I will have to make those up some time in the future.

On the Jawbone Canyon to Mojave segment, we found a good spot to camp the first night, about a mile from Highway 14. It was a quiet place up one of the Edison roads that follow the power lines from Owens Valley to Los Angeles. The wind was blowing pretty hard, but it died down soon enough, and we slept like babies.

After awakening about seven o'clock, going through the ritual of getting out of a cozy sleeping bag into chilled clothing and munching down a

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Hiking the PCT continued

few items for breakfast, we drove back to the Jawbone Canyon store, and began walking to Mojave around eight a.m. Because of the high winds the day before, we all decided on long pants for the walk, a move we were to regret later.

As soon as we began walking, a few questions occured to me. Why are we walking along the highway here? Surely the trail must be in those mountains to the west of the road?" As always, Linda had done her homework.

"The actual trail swings way out into those mountains and is about six miles longer than walking the highway. It crosses a ranch back in there, where the land owners have been shooting at hikers on their property!" I was satisfied. The highway looked just fine to me from that point on.

The day was beautiful. The wind never did come up. None of us had thought to include shorts in our day packs, and the Levis were getting hot.

"Oh well," I thought, "this will burn off a few of those pounds I've built up." I'm sure it did.

I found out some very important things on this particular day. Les has a long stride and takes right off when he sets out. Linda is a very good hiker, also. She got right behind Les and had no problem keeping up with his pace. Then I realized what poor shape I was in, despite all the cross country skiing I had done this winter. But the most important discovery was the one that kept me pushing on. I found that if I just kept my eyes on Linda's lovely rear end, the miles passed quickly. I have been giving it a lot of thought and I believe this discovery may be the most important factor in my completion of the PCT. As long as Linda keeps walking in front of me, I will be able to keep going.

Les is a nice guy, born about twelve years too late for the hippie phenomenon. A typical conversation with Les is liberally laced with his

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favorite sayings: "Far out!" "Cosmic!" and so on. I do not think it likely that Les is going to be able to make the trip.

Any ideas Linda comes up with - Pacific Crest Trail, Palm Springs, Alaska, Nepal, whatever - Les agrees that it sounds good and wants to go along. He is protective of her and concerned for her well being.

Then there is Linda. Ah, lovely Linda! She seems to me to be the epitome of Hippie Chick. She is an open, enthusiastic free spirit. She is always on the move. Whenever she is in one place, she will be preparing to move on to the next.

"After the PCT we'll live in Palm Springs for the winter and make a bunch of money working at a good restaurant. Then we can drive to Alaska and spend the summer up there. You can make real good money in Alaska." I don't have the heart to remind her of the cost of living and inflation in Alaska. It might be fun to go there, too. Hmmm . . .

Linda has done all the legwork on this trip. Every detail has been worked out in advance. She knows how many miles we will walk each day, the exact places we will camp each night, the menu of every meal we will eat on the trail. The food orders have been made out, and all I have to do is get my income tax refund and order my food.

March 19, 1982

Things are beginning to fall into place. I am spending a lot of money! The right parka, the right boots, rain pants, spoons, flashlight, insect repellent. Running shoes to hike on some of the paved roads along the route. There will be several sections where we might encounter ice slopes, as well as rivers to ford during peak runoff. A rope is in order. I ordered my food from the food co-ops, health food stores, and discount stores in Bishop and Lone Pine. There is a ton of it! It is amazing how much it takes to supply us for six months. Trying to get everything is insane.

As fast as the money comes in, it goes out. I bought the airline tickets. It turns out that Linda has planned the trip in four different sections that are separated by three airline flights. We will drive to Mexico on Sunday, March 28 (only nine more shopping days until Christmas) and start walking from the border just south of Campo, said to be beautiful at this time of year. From Campo we will travel up through the Cleveland National Forest, over San Jacinto, San Gorgonio, the San Bernardino Mountains, and finally through the San Gabriel Mountains before we reach Acton about April 26. Then we plan about four days of rest before flying from LAX to Medford, Oregon.

From Medford, we will head south through Northern California to Lake Tahoe, through Tuolomne Meadows, to finish at Devil's Postpile National Monument in early July. I suspect that communications between Linda and I will be reduced to signals, motions and signs by then. After all, how many times can a person comment upon beautiful vistas without becoming totally obnoxious? We may welcome the addition of company to our trek for the pleasure of hearing new voices saying new things.

After spending the Fourth of July in Bishop on a two-day layover, we will fly back to Medford and start walking north, around Crater Lake, into the Cascades. We will follow the Cascades all the way to the Canadian border, where we will arrive in Manning Park on September 6, Linda's birthday. What a present! After finding that Linda had planned to reach Canada on her birthday, I decided to check the schedule to see what the game plan called for on my birthday, July 25. A twenty-five mile hike! Obviously, I should have been more closely involved in the early planning stages of the trip.

Once we reach Canada, we will catch a flight back to Los Angeles,

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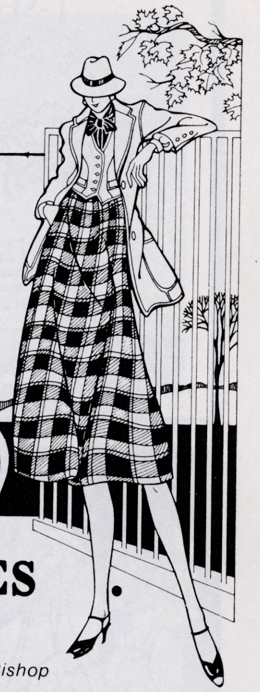

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ride up to Weldon near Lake Isabella, and from there walk for ten days through the southern Sierra, to wind up our journey on top of Mt. Whitney. A fitting end to an amazing journey. March 20, 1982

I have been spending a lot of money on the things we think will be necessary for the trip. Whenever I start wondering if I really need to buy this stuff, I remember the investment Linda is making. Her father co-signed a loan for her, and called it "financing an expedition." It gives the trip a ring I like: the Hayward & Elliott Expedition! (I've learned Linda's last name).

Linda has invested in some very good equipment for the trip. Fortunately, in planning an expedition to climb Mt. McKinley, some friends wrote to almost every mountaineering equipment manufacturer about expedition discounts. Linda was able to order a lot of her equipment with them.

We had a memorable evening in the bar, recently, Les, Linda, and friends and I. Everyone was dying for money. Linda was anxious for her loan, Les was planning a pilgrimage to Nevada to win his fortune for the trip, the rest of us were weighing jobs and income tax refunds. We all had big plans for adventures, but none of us had any money. As it turned out, little by little, we all financed our expeditions.

I haven't spent as much as Linda has, but I've sure bought more equipment than I had ever dreamed of buying before. Gore-Tex parka, Danner Lite boots (sounds like a beer ad - "lower in calories than most other boots"), 9 mm rope, rainpants, polypropylene socks, polypropylene long underwear, nylon pile pants, wool socks, Spenco insoles, Nike running shoes, Spenco Second Skin, tons of Muskol insect repellent, sunscreen, and polypropylene gloves. I have a Snow Lion Polarguard sleeping bag, a Jansport D-3 backpack, an ice axe, crampons, Hanwag hiking boots, a Thermarest sleeping bag, down vest, down parka, gaiters, wind pants, milar mitts, Dachstein mittens, down booties, down mittens, and down gauntlets.

Now is probably a good time to define some of the terms I have been throwing around here. Gore-Tex is a material constructed in such a way that it is waterproof, but still able to breathe. In other words, if a person is standing in a rainstorm in a Gore-Tex parka, the rain water will not penetrate, but at the same time moisture from that person's body will pass through the material, to eliminate the clammy feeling.

Polarguard is a continuous filament, insulating material that does not absorb water. If it gets wet, it maintains it's insulating properties. If a Polarguard bag gets wet, all you have to do is wring it out and it should be as warm as it was originally. It is bulkier than down, however, and does not compact as well. Down provides excellent insulation and is very light weight, but is utterly useless if it becomes wet.

Polypropylene and nylon pile clothing have proven to be as good as wool when it comes to both warmth and ability to maintain insulation value when wet. Not only will these articles of clothing keep you nice and toasty, but they are also about one quarter of the weight of wool, which makes it worth the investment for a trip of this nature. So much for our equipment. I sure hope all this stuff does what it is supposed to do, or we could be in for a real long trip.

Then there is this six months supply of food. A person does not know the true meaning of boredom until he sits down and packages 170 individual two-ounce servings of raisins or dates. Or 170 individual four-ounce servings of either dried apples, dried pears, dried peaches, dried apricots, raisins, or dates. Or 170 individual two-ounce

continued on next page

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servings of either Ry-Krisp or Cheez-itz crackers.

If I had known what was involved in getting the food organized, I would have given this trip a little more thought. Waiting for me at home are still 35 four-ounce servings of raisins and 85 four-ounce servings of cheddar cheese.

We have been using a Seal-a-Meal to package these individual servings, and I have already spent $72.39 on Seal-a-Meal bags. I have an awful feeling that the people at Sierra Hardware and Western Auto suspect I must be the biggest dope dealer in town, the way I've been clearing their shelves of plastic bags.

March 22, 1982

One week from today we will have hiked our first day of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mexican border. I am beginning to feel excited and apprehensive. What in the world do I think I am doing? The doubts I have managed to ignore are forcing themselves into my consciousness. Why am I doing this? I have quit my job, given up my home, sold my car and I am going to leave a place I love. All this to walk from Mexico to Canada!

Out of the four to five hundred people who start this trek every spring, only forty to fifty complete it. Are Linda and I going to be in that elite group that finish the trail? Why should we be able to do what so many have failed to accomplish? The doubts are driving me nuts!

I am now so anxious to start that I am ready to climb walls. Why not do it? I am feeling lucky to have the opportunity to attempt something of this magnitude. If determination is the main factor in completing the Pacific Crest Trail, I have no doubt that, barring a major catastrophe (death, broken leg, hangnail) we will be sitting on Mt. Whitney six months from now with a satisfied look on our faces and a sense of accomplishment that few people will ever feel.

I'm ready. ■

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HIGH COUNTRY HOMES

MT.

The Bonnefin home in Lone Pine is decorated in earthtones with thick carpeting and woodwork.

Dorothy and Al Bonnefin of Lone Pine have created their dream house on the site where they lived when they were first married thirty years ago.

Dorothy is a broker for Century 21 in Lone Pine. Al is the owner of Inyo Building Contractors. They met when she was going to high school in Independence and Al was attending Lone Pine High.

After their marriage they rented one of three old homes that stood on the property where they now reside.

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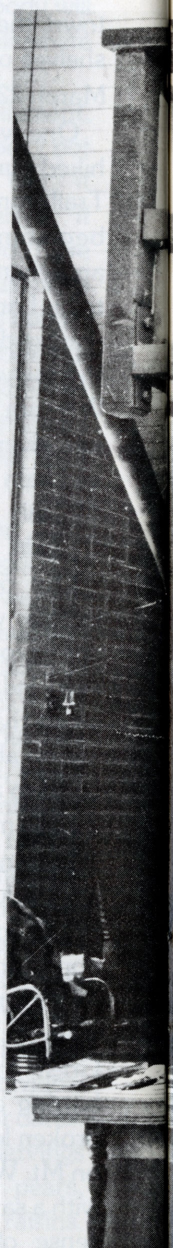
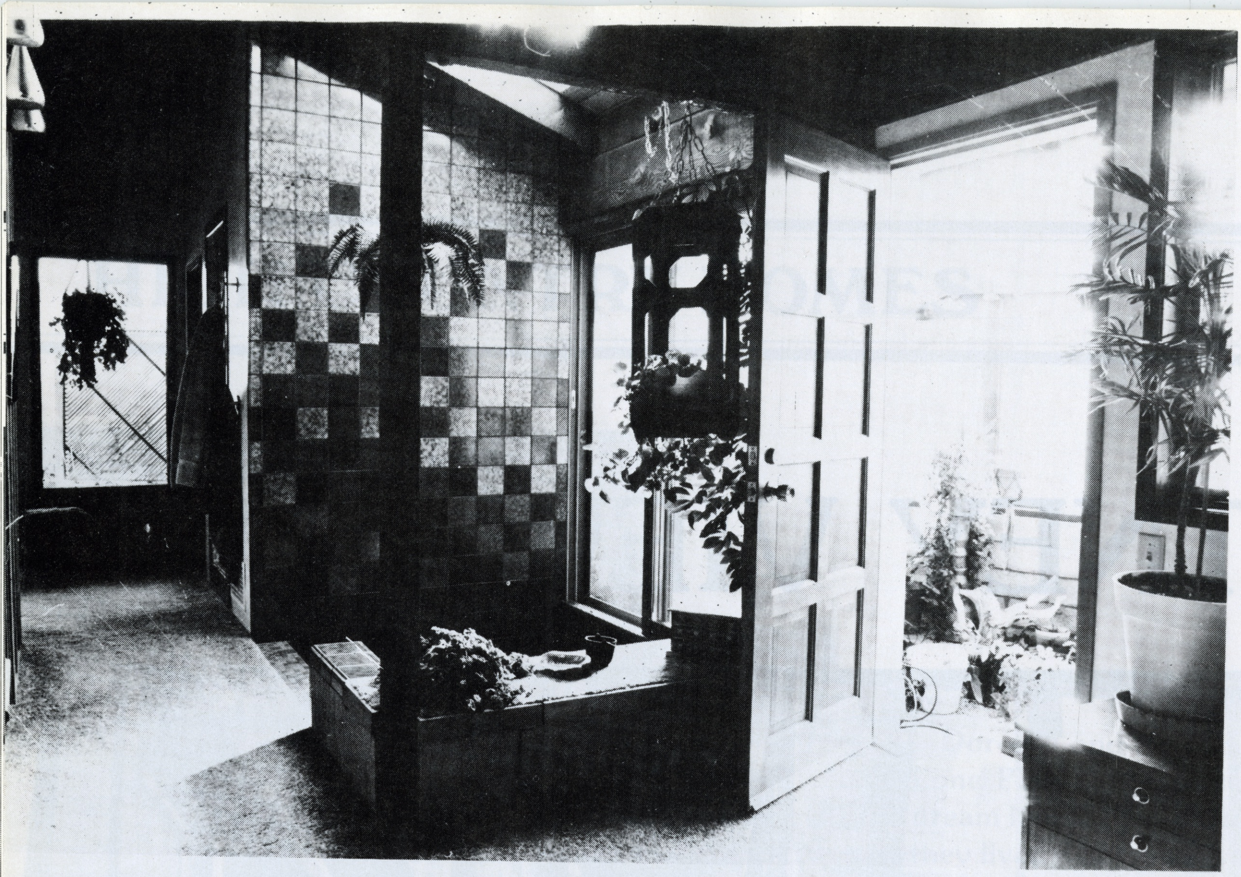


A loft and floor-to-ceiling windows add drama to the home.
The woodburning stove is designed for maximum warmth, by running the flue on the inside where heat is radiated into the house.

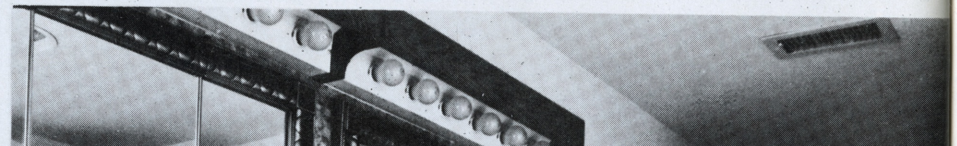
WHITNEY VIEW



The bath is light and airy with a sunken tub with skylight above. A door leads to an outdoor garden area.

The dream house project was begun in October and completed the following June. It is done in earthtones with thick carpeting and woodwork. It is located at the edge of town, with open land on two sides providing space and privacy. Views of Mt. Whitney can be seen from every room.

An open staircase leads to a loft and windows go from floor to ceiling. One wall provides a gallery for the art collection they both enjoy. Plants everywhere give the home a French country flavor. Dorothy tells us the house is ideal for entertaining. Together, she and Al have made a beautiful space for themselves in the High Sierra. ■



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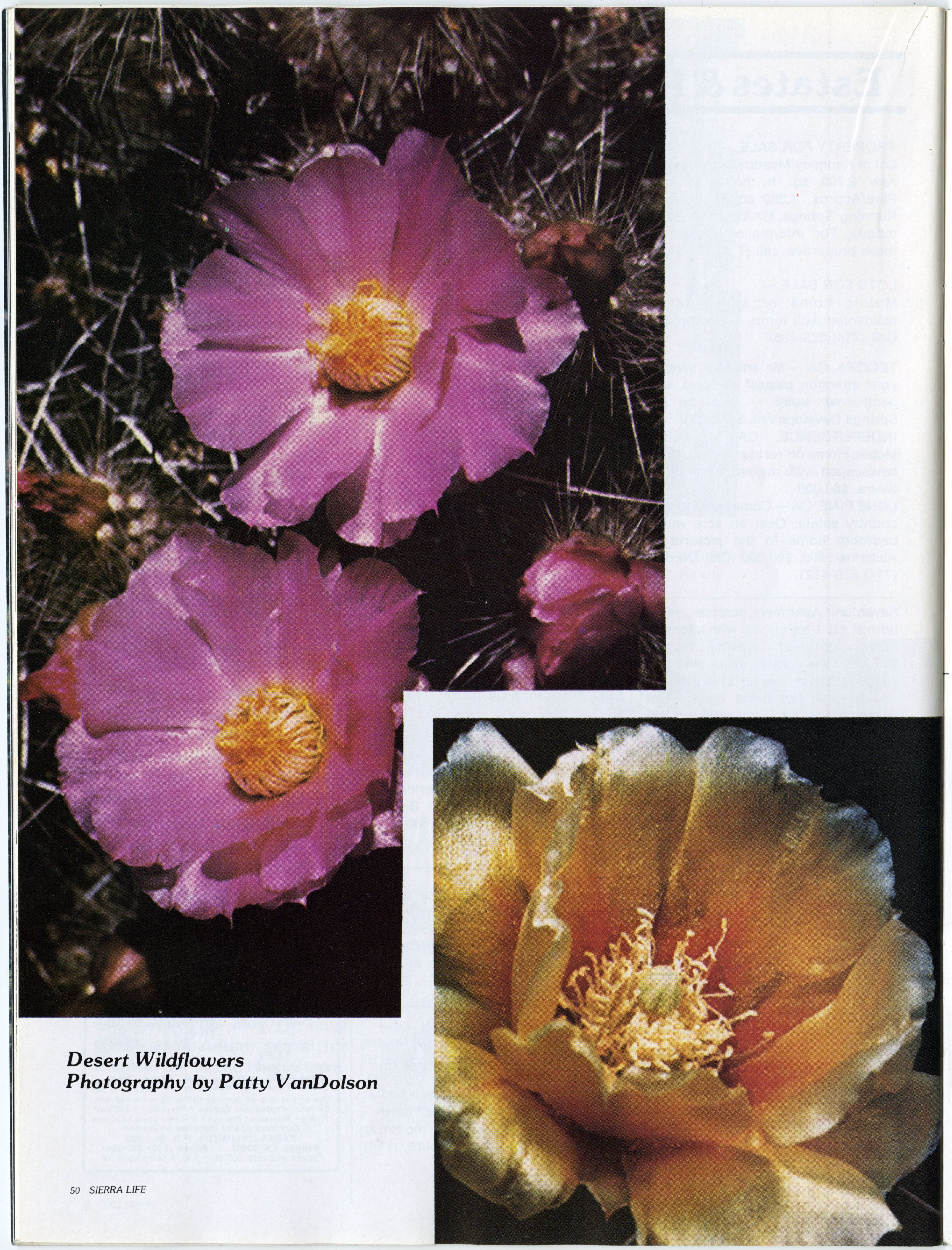

Desert Wildflowers
Photography by Patty VanDolson

The Commonly Unseen

by Jane Fisher

The wildflowers of Death Valley never appear in ordered season. When the first seeds drifted here down the long corridors of botanical time, they dropped upon a land churned by convulsion, drowned under antediluvian seas, eroded, frozen and burned. Only the most precise blend of utopian weather can bring out the dazzling pageant that staggers the senses, stops cars, and triggers that whispered telegraph: "The wildflowers are blooming in Death Valley"

Death Valley is part of the great basin and range province of the interior West. Moist air flowing from the Pacific Ocean is blocked by intervening mountain ranges and the descending dry air soaks up any existing moisture. Swept by bleak winds, washed by cloudbursts, and blistered under midsummer sun, the beaten ground still nurtures dormant seedlings. There is not a month of the year without flowers of some kind, somewhere in the desert, but only once in awhile does the stunning exhibition of color blaze across the great sweeps between February and March.

Salisbury Pass, between Death Valley and Shoshone, when the time is right, is where you will find the most spectacular collection. When the sages seem to turn silver, amber, cream and pink, find a copy of *California Desert Wildflowers* by Philip A. Munz, or *Desert Wild Flowers* by Edmund C. Jaeger, and wander the washes, plains and hills of the open land. You may find the beautiful nolina, a lovely desert star, or the fragile pink cups of a fivespot.

In that ethereal Spring that may come after several long, tender, well-spaced winter rains, the desert air is transparent, luminous.

A thousand acres of sand are overlaid with a waist-deep mosaic of trembling white and gold. An understory of lilac, rose, pink and yellow shimmers through, and a microhabitat of fuzzy little stems and leaves covered with minute bits of rainbow paves the desert floor with gossamer and silk. Tiny purple gilia flings a velvet mantle over great black domes of contorted obsidian. When the horizon crinkles with rising warmth, all the spices of Cathay and perfumes older than Eve

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combine to exude an essence as elemental as the earth itself.

Under the circumstances, one cannot expect flowers with such whimsical names as cheese bush, winter fat, green molly, and yellow-frock to behave as virtuously as petunias and pansies.

Wishbone bush, for instance, a California four-o'clock, forms sprawling masses of hairy stems, and then sprouts delicate magenta blossoms. Paint brush, whose bright brachts appear to have been dipped in pots of paint from pale orange to bright red, may send up a single spike or opt for whole bushes of color. The chuparosa, or humming bird's flower, looks like a lot of tattered, dull red flags tied on a bunch of sticks, but its honey is seductive to bird and man.

Then there is the desert mallow, a Hollyhock relative with acne, called "sore eyes poppy," but sporting the most beautiful of all blooms in grenadine, apricot and peach; and dandelion, the innocent whose puff ball tells us the future and grants wishes, but whose fierce name means lion's tooth. The desert aster, too, plays a whimsical role. It blossoms flamboyantly in white and lavender, with sometimes twenty heads on a plant, then turns so brown and inconspicuous that its very name, Aster abatus, means lowly, or beaten down.

Some plants are bits of history flung about the landscape. Desert mariposa lily, cousin to the exotic Joshua tree, produces exquisite tulip-shaped blossoms of pale apricot to flaming vermilion. Its name is Calochortus Kennedyi, Greek for "beautiful grass," and for Wm. L. Kennedy, a collector of Western flora.

The gold-poppy, relative of the California poppy, is named for a Russian naturalist and surgeon from the 1815 exploring ship, "Rurik." The Bigelow coreopsis, a tiny sunflower on a slender stem, is one of many specimens named for J. M. Bigelow, a doctor who collected for the Pacific Railroad Survey in 1853.

There are fragrant memorials to John C. Fremont, the early Western explorer, to French physicians, German botanists, Irish explorers, American naturalists and travelers. Ironically, our history is still so young, our land so recently exploited, that there were still whole wildernesses to be catalogued only a generation or two ago. There were species of life then that can never be resurrected now. How much better to have nurtured than to have forever wasted. E. O. Wilson, professor of science, estimates that one thousand of the five million living species of animals, insects, plants and mosses on earth today will die out in a year; nature, of course, being the enemy of "progress."

Medicinal qualities of many desert plants are prized more highly than the beauty of their blooms. Golden-yarrow, a sunflower growing in tiny yellow clusters on woolly branches, contributed its fuzz for the treatment of rheumatism. It is said the fuzz-balls were set on fire on the painful area - no doubt distracting at once from any other pain. The small, fragrant golden prickly poppy was thought to ease an eye disease, and its seeds are a powerful narcotic. The desert sand verbena, another four o'clock, flaunts clusters of rose-purple flowers on trailing stems; its Roman name, Verbena Gooddingii, means "holy herb." Incense plant, which blooms in small yellow sunflower types on the ends of

(Continued on next page.)

naked stems rising from a low, curved white bush, exudes a resin that was burned as incense by the early padres, and chewed by the Indians to smear warm on the body for pain relief. The melted resin was also used as varnish.

Best known today of all desert medicinal plants is the creosote bush. It is the dominant cover of what botanists call the Lower Sonoran Life Zone of the biotic communities, and clearly marks the boundary between the upper and lower divisions of the Mojave and Colorado deserts. More romantically, it may also mark the shorelines of ancient lakes. Its tiny, fat, sticky leaves and bright yellow windmill-twisted blooms wave gracefully from hundreds of acres of airy bushes. The resinous sap is harmful to animals, and Mexicans call it *hediondilla,* "the little bad smeller," but the leaves are stripped for potions to treat everything from rheumatism and tuberculosis, to cancer, as well as antiseptic for burns and cuts. The incrustations on the stems were gathered by the Indians to waterproof baskets and pots.

The clever Indian people, who wasted nothing and found the best uses for all things provided by nature, sustained themselves in other ways on desert plants. The beavertail cactus, of the luminous pink flowers and flat blades full of nasty needles, were dried, boiled with salt and eaten. The barrel cactus, with its wicked, long interlaced needles and greenish yellow waxen blooms, is comprised almost entirely of water. Even wild burros know enough to kick one to pieces when dying of thirst. Desert candle, clustered deep purple flowers atop a flat, hollow, asparagus-like stem, was eaten green or cooked with meat for stew.

The primrose cousins, looking like a scattered drift of sweet scented facial tissues opening across the evening landscape, have a vital place in the web of life. The dune or desert primrose is often called devil's lantern, and forms the wiry little cages desert folk like to gather for decorations. Sphinx moth larvae feed on the leaves and flowers, and in turn were food for the Cahuilla Indians. Delicate chartreuse crab spiders pretend to be primrose antlers to deceive their prey. The evening-primrose grows closer to the ground than the dune primrose and is long flowering. It may be transplanted to live among domestics.

There are the austere, the humorous, the medicinal, the rare, the miniature, and the simply beautiful in these wild gardens. The one thing you may be sure of is that they will not appear on any dependable time schedule.

On the other hand, if it is reliability you require in your adventuring, there are the wildflowers of British Columbia. One summer day, trekking with three small girls up a flower splattered gorge through a wild park in the Canadian border country, I became aware of the many ripe berries and recalled with sudden chill that this was a bear migration route. When any small face turned to me to remark in wonder over some new and lovely flower, I urged it onward, onward. Finally, our little Canadian turned back and said, perceptively, "Don't worry. If a bear comes, just be going the other way."

"I will," I said, "I will!"

If someone whispers to you that the wildflowers are blooming in Death Valley and you must go right now, say you will, you will. You may never have a second chance in your lifetime.■

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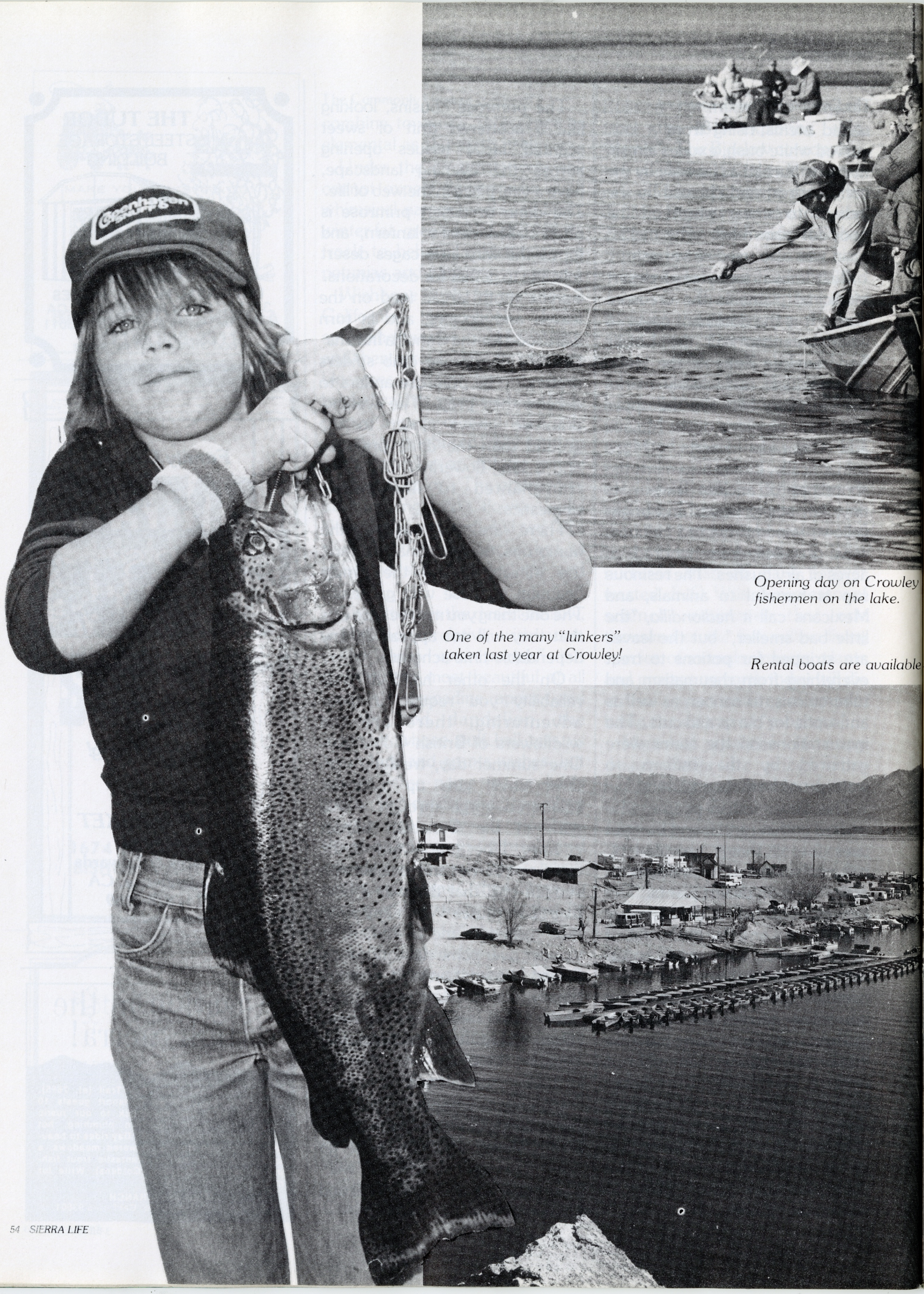

Opening day on Crowley
fishermen on the lake.

One of the many "lunkers"
taken last year at Crowley!

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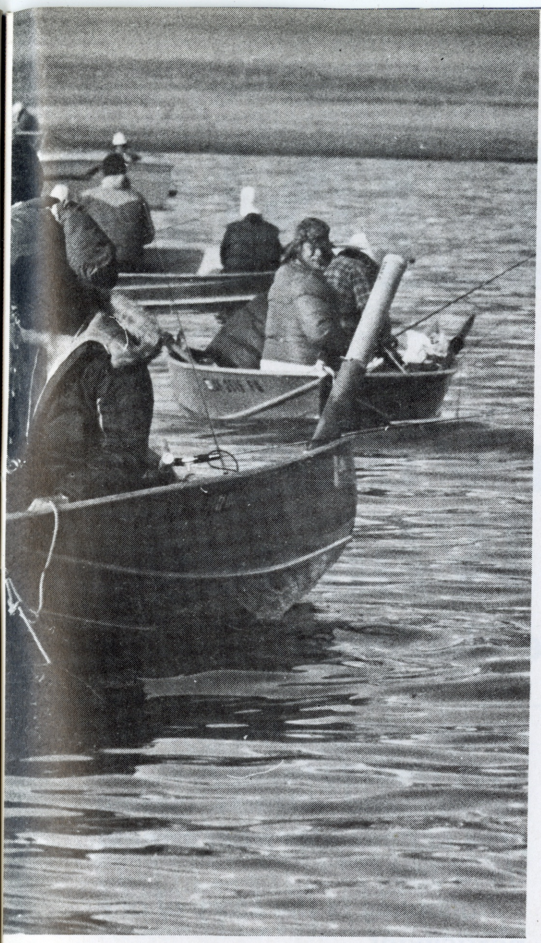

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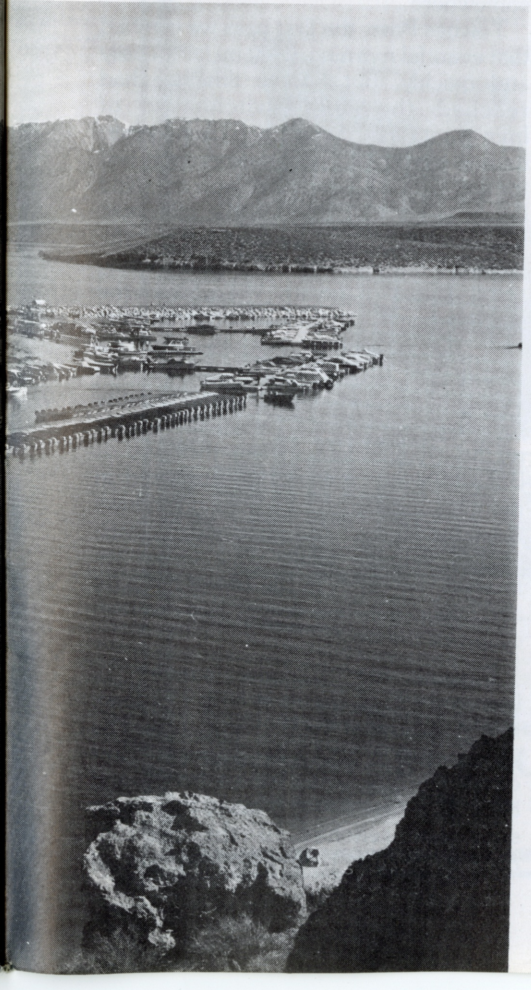


Big Weekend Expected for Crowley Lake Opening

by Blake Jones

The High Sierra is preparing for the opening of trout season on April 24th. One of the highlights is the opening of Crowley Lake to the thousands of fishermen and fisherwomen who come to the Sierra to enjoy fishing at its best!

According to Dave Griffith, recreation director for the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department, there will be plenty of room for campers during opening weekend and, although rental boats are already booked for opening weekend, they will be available during the season at reasonable rates.

South Landing will open on April 19th and this year for the first time, will remain open in designated areas for the entire season.

This will be the first time that camping will be permitted at South Landing after opening weekend. This will continue on a trial basis until the extent of use can be determined.

North Landing and Leighton Springs will open April 22nd.

Inflatable boats that meet safety standards will be allowed on the lake for the first time this year.

All private boats must be inspected before going on the lake. Inspection at Crowley will run continuously from 6AM Friday until 8PM Sunday over opening weekend. Officials expect over 1,000 boats to be inspected during this time.

Boat inspections are also being done at Hansen Dam in the Pacoima area of Southern California to save time opening day. Call (213) 899-2330 for further information.

We expect fishing at Crowley and all High Sierra locations to be especially good this year.

Most sporting goods stores in the Sierra will be open Friday night to provide bait and equipment.

See you opening weekend!

CYCLING

Death Valley To Mt. Whitney

. . . the ultimate challenge!

For the past eight years the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce has sponsored the ultimate Bike Race — From Stovepipe Wells in Death Valley to the top of Mt. Whitney. This race is not for the faint of heart. It is by far the most challenging race in the country and attracts cycling pros and novices from around the world.

Following is the story of one participant.

by Nicolaus Faust

There we were hurtling down Townes Pass on bicycles. Hurtling was quite the word for it, as I had probably never ridden a bicycle that fast in my life. But the curves were smooth, long, well banked, and quick.

Below me a long line of riders in their colorful jerseys flashed smoothly through the curves into the morning heat of Panamint Valley, and across the valley toward the long torturous ascent of Immigrant Pass.

This is bicycle racing in mountainous Inyo County. The annual 100 mile Death Valley to Whitney Portal race. Some sixty riders started the race at Stovepipe Wells, on the floor of Death Valley, at dawn. It was a warm, humid May morning with but a hint of a breeze from the direction of the Sierra, eighty miles to the west.

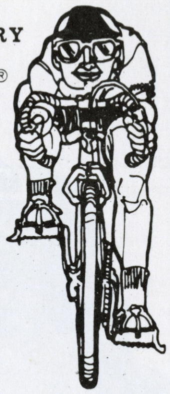
We had spent the night at the Stovepipe Wells campground, trading bicycling tall tales, enjoying the warm evening outside our sleeping bags, napping and watching the stars passing serenely overhead.

Approaching the half-way point up 5,000 foot Townes Pass, the sun began to take its toll, and several of the riders abandoned the ardorous climb, removing themselves into waiting cars and vans, and disappearing into the morning, perhaps to reappear and try again next year.

While straining my way up the pass, I noticed a rider who kept disappearing into a van that was following the race. He then reappeared behind me, sprinted past with a wild gleam in his eyes. Then several minutes later disappeared back into the van for more refreshments, then once again reappeared behind me and sprinted by once more. But then he, his antics, and his van all disappeared out there, somewhere . . .

Townes Pass, the first pass we climbed that eventful morning, went by fairly easily and quickly, but by the time we had reached the long switchbacks of Immigrant Pass, the sun had risen higher; its rays seemed to penetrate deeper, and for some unaccountable reason my mind began to wander through the old ghost towns, the rusting mining camps, the shifting dunes and the shimmering timelessness of Death Valley and the surrounding desert. Similar thoughts must have been flickering through the mind of a nearby rider as he remarked wryly that the vultures that had been circling over the race were waiting for the stragglers to give up the struggle and see things their way . . . But the water bottles that appeared in friendly hands reaching out of car windows helped to fend off exaustion and the ever-circling vultures finally gave up as we finished our climb to the top of the pass and began our long decent into the high desert of the west.

Beyond the welcome summit of Immigrant Pass the road began its long, rolling traverse of the Darwin Plateau. The wind began to slow our progress, and I could see only a few riders before and behind me as I slowly crossed the windy, sunswept reaches of the plateau. Apparently the nine thousand feet of



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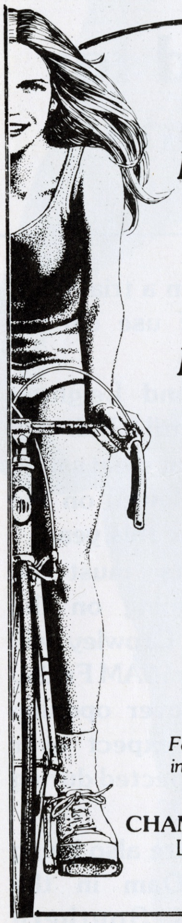

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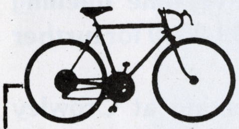

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climbing we had experienced in crossing the two passes had taken its toll and further strung out the racers.

Riding through the high plateau country, through the silent, immobile Joshua trees, it did not feel like I was racing at all, but rather caught up in the spacious, timelessness of the desert, neither coming nor going.

This sensation was unexpected. Somehow I had expected smoothly running pace lines of riders, subtle racing tactics, cheering throngs, incredible bursts of energy. But the desert, the sun changes everything, cooks the brain, frazzles the mind. . .

With the wind stiffening in our faces, I had joined several other riders, and we rode in tandem to break the wind's force, and to urge each other on, to rejoin the reality of the race, and to finish — to above all, finish!

And finish we did, amis the cheers and congratulations of family and friends, and fellow riders as well, for we had all faced an amazing and unusual challenge, and succeeded in a most unforgetable event. But somehow, somewhere, a part of me is still out there, pedaling, pedaling . . .

For information on the 8th Annual Death Valley to Mt. Whitney Bike Race contact the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce, Lone Pine, CA 93545, (714) 876-4444.

Notes From Tonopah

by Beverly Pillers

Ed. Note: We've added a new department to our regular features — Notes from Tonopah will be included in each issue so we can keep up on our good Nevada neighbors!

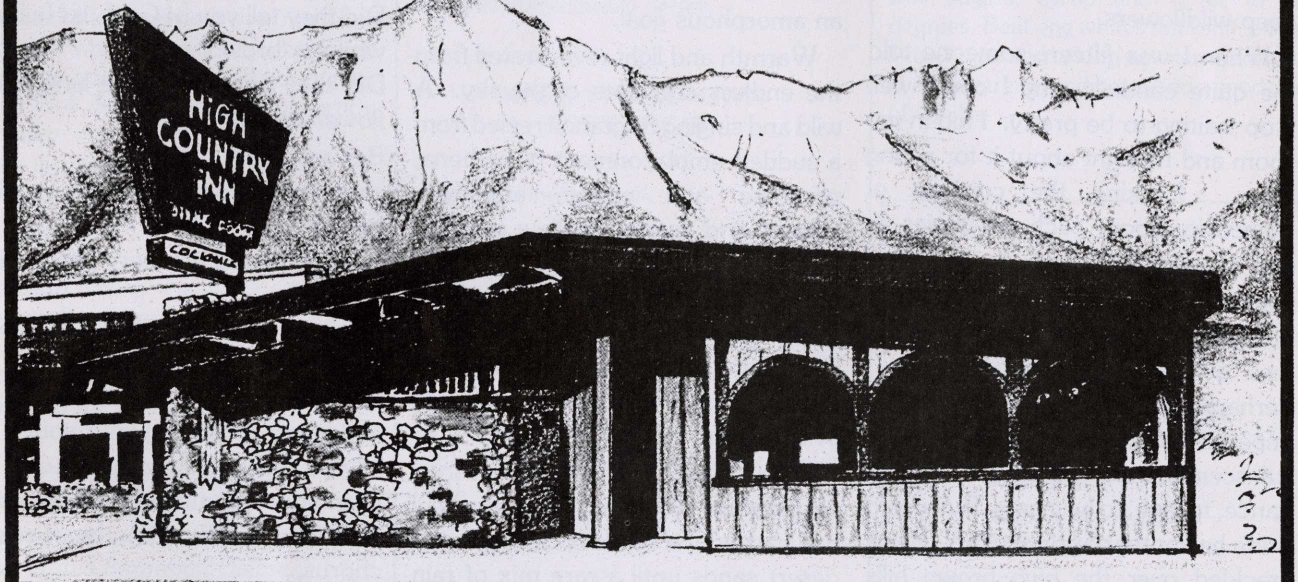
TONOPAH — Nye County license plates are a common sight on Bishop streets and we've spotted more than a few Bishop cars around the Mizpah hotel on Saturday night.

This friendly exchange between the two was paved. Tonopahans have discovered that Bishop offers a distinct change from high desert scenery, the closest golf course in summer and the handiest ski lift in the winter. Bishopites favor Tonopah for rock and antique bottle hunting as well as well as the traditional Nevada indoor sports.

According to Homer White, a retired cowpuncher friend of ours who claims both Tonopah and Bishop as his home, many pioneer Nevada ranchers migrated to the Owens Valley. "There was Frank Butler and Charlie Summers who had the big Butler and Summers spread, and the Clines and Bev Hunter and the Arcularius family. They all had big outfits around Tonpah. Later, as they sold out, they all moved into Owens Valley. Higher grass and shorter winters was the reason." Recalling early-day trips over Montgomery Pass, Homer said:

"In the old days it took half a day and two flat tires to get to Tonopah, and that was in good weather. It's easier now, so I divide my socializing time between Rusty's and the Mizpah. That way I'm getting the best of both cultures."

The past month has been one to sit by the fire but we'll be seeing you in Bishop come first thaw as we have a motorcycle and two cats to be fixed. We also look forward to duck-watching in the park and an evening of Al Winter's piano music.



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from the Diary of a Country Woman . . .

by Jane Fisher

Today I said goodbye forever to a friend, and found the first frail flower frozen in the snow.

I grieve for lost flowerings. Carpets of poppies ripped up for trains to leave a legacy of rusted iron. Sheets of dune lupine and anemone paved over with parking lots to possess the sea. Greed that has left only the ghosts of waist deep wildflowers.

When I was fifteen, someone told me quite candidly why I could well stop waiting to be pretty. I hid in my room and thought about it for a long time. Lacking the courage of objectivity about such advisories as yet, I came to no conclusions, but went out and hunted up the first silver pussy willows and wondered what the fuss over Spring was all about. Perhaps it renewed certain primordial imperatives: the sudden singing that transcends pain, the urge to run, to dance, to love, to be, again. But would there be another Spring? April dawns crackled over the high brown hills across the frozen tule marsh, with nothing but a mourning dove to grace the chill green wind.

"Never mind," my mother said. "It will come to you again, on the desert." That crashing, glaring, unbounded bunch of relentless rocks and unforgiving sun? Never.

But one solemn dawn I was caught by accident in the delicate rapture of a whimsical desert Spring. I sat in gloom, thinking in terms of "once upon a time," and other things that cannot be. A lizard sat nearby, blinking with the effort to locate a horizon. A tarantula tiptoed through feathers of rice grass, and a placid tortoise scratched steadfastly toward an amorphous goal.

Warmth and light reverbrated from the endless corridors of the sky. A wild and singing fragrance reeled from a sudden emblazonment of verbena, primrose and poppy, amethyst, apricot and scarlet, mallow and lily, lilac and gold. Dandelion, thistlesage, pennyroyal and paintbrush flung fragile membranes of color to the sun. The lizard and I clung to our rock, dazzled in a flickering sea of tattered irridescence.

Here, then, were the vanished wildflowers. Wind and wagon wheel had carried the seeds of Spring to the desert sands until a rare mix of rain and sun summoned this splendor of perfume and prism.

Today I seek again the ancient mystery. My mood as gray as the clay colored monotony of chill daybreak, I wait beneath the vast desert sky for some message to rise with the incense and radiance of the renaissance of Spring. A breeze flickers across the silken acres. Is it a breeze or a sigh? Has my friend remembered?

The song of desert Spring sleeps inside ourselves. Given time, will it always sing again?

Ah poet!
There you are like a silver icicle
with your flashing edges, brilliant reflections
and your transcience.
Have you really stood in the green dawn wind
and cried with the coo of the mourning dove?
Or is it your own dazzling voice you hear -
cinnamon tones, the spice of silken seduction?
Did you learn or live your song of the liquid tongue?
Have you called to your own from the ancient ground?
Did they come? Have you talked? Did they cry?
Did they cry for the earth and the goose music gone
and the poets still singing its song?
Did they tell you of God - is He black, white or brown?
Did they speak with the language of flower or owl?
Beware poet!
Your enchantments of sibilant seeking sounds -
that wonderful witchery practiced so blithely -
can evoke from very hallowed ground
the Voices
to haunt you
and linger to ride on your soul
'til you, too, will come down
from your mountain of genuine bliss
and join with that heart-searing chorus,
that magnificent collection of sound
that rises and echoes
and haunts and re-sings
from the ancient and
ghost-sodden ground.
(POET OF THE DREAMING EARTH
from Songs of a Country Woman)

SIERRA KITCHEN

BRAISED SIERRA POT ROAST

4 - 5lb. seven blade roast

Dredge meat in flour with a pinch of salt. Have hot a large heavy skillet with a lid. Melt 1/4 lb. butter and add 4 tbs. olive oil. Add to this 1 thinly sliced onion and some minced garlic. Cook until tender. Add meat and braise over medium heat for one hour, turning several times. While braising, season with the following:

San Francisco Seasoning
Fuller Brush Seasoning
Marjoram
Fennel
Sweet Basil
Freshly ground black pepper
Freshly ground mustard
Cayenne pepper
Sage
Salt
Cinnamon
Nutmeg

The amounts of the above may be varied according to taste, or the lack thereof.

Add a good shot of New Orleans molasses during the last 20 minutes of braising. Turn heat down to low and pour over meat one cup of port wine and one cup of chicken broth. Add one Bay leaf and cover pan. Simmer for 4 - 5 hours, adding more broth, if necesary.

For the last hour of cooking add:

small potatos
sliced celery
sliced carrots
whole pearl onions
whole small mushrooms

Cook these with the lid on the skillet. Serve when the mood strikes.

PARMESAN PUFFS

by Valerie J. Naso

1/2 cup mayonaise
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Coleman's dry mustard
Fuller Brush Seasoning
San Francisco Seasoning

Mix. Seasonings may be varied in any direction. Put dab of mixture on cracker. Bake at 400 degrees about 8-10 minutes. Chopped green onion tops may be added for decoration and diversion.

DUCHESS MILK SOUP

Valerie J. Naso

1 quart extra rich milk
2 medium yellow onions, chopped fine
2 1/2 tbs. flour
3 1/2 tbs. butter
2 egg yolks
salt
white pepper
2 tbs. grated Havarti cheese (Jack may be used)

Put milk in large pan to heat. Do not boil. Fry 2 tbs. of the butter with the onions for ten minutes (longer for a more caramel flavor). Add flour and cook two minutes longer. Stir into the hot milk and cook ten minutes.

Put mixture through a blender on chop, on cup at a time. Return to heat. Add cheese. Beat egg yolks with salt and pepper to taste. Pour into these a little of the hot milk, then return all to the pan. Add the remaining 1 1/2 tbs. butter and leave on the heat (low) for three minutes.

This is more work than opening a can, but it tastes considerably better.

MAKE—YOUR—OWN IRISH CREAM

1 can evaporated milk
4 eggs
1 tbs. strong coffee
1 tbs. chocolate syrup
6 ozs. Irish whiskey

Beat eggs and milk together. Add remaining ingredients and put in a tightly stoppered bottle. Do not hesitate to taste as you go. Mixture should be kept in the refrigerator and will keep for six weeks. (ha!).

ANNIE'S DRINK FROM FURNACE CREEK

by

Valerie J. Naso

1 oz. Bailey's Irish Cream
1 oz. Amaretto
1 tbs. cream

Pour over ice.

THE BEST BUTTERMILK CAKE

by Valerie J. Naso

1 cup butter
3 cups sugar
5 cups flour
2 cups buttermilk
1/2 tsp. soda
4 eggs, seperated

Beat butter to a cream in a large bowl, then add sugar and beat until light. Add egg yolks and beat some more (nobody said this was easy). Add soda to buttermilk, then add alternately with flour. Beat until smooth. Beat the egg whites until stiff. Fold in by hand with a rubber spatula. Bake in two 9 inch greased pans at 375 degrees for one hour, or until golden. Cool on racks. Frost with the following.

BROWN SUGAR ICING

3 egg whites
1 1/2 cups brown sugar
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 1/4 tbs. light Karo corn syrup
1/3 tsp. baking powder
3 tbs. sugar
1/2 cup cold water

Boil sugars, syrup and water to 242 degrees. Beat egg whites until stiff, adding 3 tbs. sugar and baking powder. Add syrup in a thin stream and beat. Add a good dose of vanilla.

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BISHOP

SIERRA EMBERS — Visitors and locals alike choose Sierra Embers when looking for great food and fantastic atmosphere. Special Christmas menu includes: Roast Goose with all the trimmings, Prime Rib or Beef, Top Sirloin for two, Stuffed Shrimp, Chicken Kiev, Honey Glazed Ham, New York Pepper Roast—all dinners include soup, fruit salad, choice of potatoes or rice pilaf and dessert.

Banquet facilities for 15 to 130 people are also available. Sunday brunch is served from 10-1 p.m. Dinner is served 5:30-9:00 p.m. everynight. Located at 970 N. Main St. Bishop (714)873-4775

COPPER KETTLE — A favorite of locals and visitors, the warm atmosphere of the Copper Kettle offers fine family dining for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Open 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Located on Main Street/Bishop next to Whiskey Creek.

WHISKEY CREEK — A delightful dining experience, featuring a new selection on the menu of fresh fish daily. Dinner from 5:30-10:00 Reservations suggested (714) 873-7174. The cocktail lounge is open from 4:30 P.M. - 2 a.m. weekdays and 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. weekends. Master Card, VISA and American Express accepted.

MAMMOTH LAKES

ROGET'S — Offers a different and innovative cuisine, complimented by a varied selection of fine wines. Light sauces enhance dishes of veal, prawns, scallops, and lamb. Steak lovers will enjoy the mustard and pepper steaks, while vegetable devotees will delight in our vegetable almandine. Cocktails served. Corner of Main Street and Minaret Rd./Mammoth Lakes, CA/(714) 934-4466.
Reservations appreciated.

Don't miss our great Sunday Brunch!

WHISKEY CREEK — Mammoth's perennial "in spot" has been completely redecorated and added a new Oyster bar upstairs, featuring seafood Florentine, oysters, delicious clam chowder and other delights. The restaurant offers the same excellent quality Whiskey Creek is renowned for plus some new entrees on the menu including fresh fish daily. Children's portions of several entrees are available. The extensive wine list features California's special vinters and the selection compliments any dinner. The lounge upstairs offers a full bar and entertainment nightly. Reservations suggested (714) 934-2555. Located at the intersection of Highway 203 and Minaret Rd. Open 5:30-10 p.m. Sun thru Thurs. and 5-11 p.m. Fri. and Sat. The Oyster bar is open until 11 p.m.

SHOGUN — Mammoth's only Japanese Restaurant, is hailed by locals and visitors as being a deliciously authentic restaurant. Entree's include Tempura, Beef or Chicken Sukiyaki or Teriyaki with miso soup, steamed rice and green tea. All dishes are prepared from scratch to bring you the freshest and finest in Japanese cooking. Skewered appetizers are accompanied by hot or cool sake, wine or imported Japanese beers. Located in the Mammoth Mini Mall on Laurel Mountain Rd. behind the Safeway center. Open 7 days 5:00 p.m. Reservations recommended (714) 934-3970. MC and VISA accepted.

THE MOGUL STEAKHOUSE — Owner/host Dan Haydon has added a full bar to accommodate the spring crowds. Prices are reasonable and the atmosphere relaxed and friendly. Steaks are the main bill of fare, cooked by the best chef in the world , you! In addition to steaks there are daily specials of marinated boneless trout, breast of chicken or a heaping vegetable plate topped with butter or cheese sauce. All entree's include an extensive gourmet salad bar and hot bread. The desserts are VERY famous in the Eastern Sierra — Cinnamon Charlotte, (Dan's Grandmother's own recipe), Gingerbread with hot lemon sauce and ice cream. Located on Mammoth Tavern Rd. directly behind Safeway —
Opens at 5:00 p.m. 7 nights for dinner. Reservations recommended (714) 934-3039. MC and VISA accepted.

IN THE ASPENS — This charming restaurant, a landmark in the Hilton Creek-Crowley Lake area, is a special place to relax and enjoy lunch or dinner away from the hustle of Mammoth. The menu offers Deli sandwiches, burgers, french dip, steaks, chicken, Mexican dishes, vegetable plates and fantastic onion rings and zucchini chips! Beer and wine available. Try some of the homemade desserts for your sweet tooth. Take Crowley Lake turn off and go to Crowley Lake Drive (Old 395) in Crowley Lake, CA./(714) 935-4620.

THE NORMANDY INN — Newly redecorated for more intimate dining, this popular French dinner house is 2 miles south of the Mammoth-June Lake airport, from Highway 395 turn off at Crowley Lake Drive. Owners John and Suzanne Olson and their family greet you with genuinely warm and friendly service. The menu boasts excellent french cuisine and appetizers. Desserts du jour are a gourmets delight. The intimate full bar offers a warm winter fire in the stone fireplace with windows overlooking Crowley Lake. Select wine list. Open 7 days a week at 5 p.m. Reservations suggested (714) 935-4406. MC and VISA accepted.

McGEE CREEK INN — A landmark built in 1929 by Senator Keough, McGee Creek Inn still maintains the charm and rustic atmosphere of the Sierra, where you can enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner. A huge stone fireplace graces the dining room where you can enjoy appetizers or entree's from the Inn's new dinner menu. Sunday dinner is a special treat with Prime Rib for two at the price of one, from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. The bar is a perfect place for after dinner drinks or just relaxing with a hot buttered rum. The bar opens daily at 11 a.m. Breakfast and lunch served from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dinner from 5:30-9:00. Closed Wednesday. Reservations (714) 935-4514.

3 miles south of McGee exit on Crowley Lake Drive (Old 395)

(continued on next page)

BIG PINE

COUNTRY KITCHEN — For the traveler on the go you'll appreciate the quick service and good food. Known up and down Highway 395 as The family restaurant. Open seven days a week, 6 a.m. til 10 p.m. Driving a motor home or pulling a trailer is no problem because there's plenty of parking. Owners Jim and Liz invite you and your family to stop in and dine the next time you pass through Big Pine. 106 S. Main Street (On Highway 395) 938-4417.

LONE PINE

HIGH COUNTRY INN — Some of the finest beef and seafood from the Meat House in Bishop. Order a cocktail and lounge comfortably by the fireside and enjoy the displayed works of Dan Dickman. Try the bonecut Prime Rib (too much for one setting), Deep fried zucchini or the rave of Lone Pine their sauteed vegetable plate. Inspiring too are the stuffed mushrooms, and always the best salad from the ever fresh salad bar. If breakfast is your thing try the homemade biscuits and gravy. Open for your dinner dining convenience 5 - 9 p.m. 7 days a week. Reservations are suggested on weekends. (714) 876-4126. 227 S. Main Street, Lone Pine — Just beneath Mt. Whitney's splendor.

Birth of a Valley *continued from page 13*

major mining effort near the valley. Billie used to be a whore over in Ryan. The mine people get a lot of flack from the park service, but those who complain the loudest seem to have the biggest Colemanite crystals in their living rooms.

Roads and transportation in the valley were the pits for a long time. Because this didn't deter people much it opened a whole new line of business; the automobile stage. Drivers went from Goldfield to Bullfrog in cars that looked as if they would never go another mile. "Alkali" Bill Brong was notorious for getting his passengers to their destination no matter what repairs had to be made along the way. When one fellow looked sadly at a broken axle, Bill said, "This don't amount to shucks. You just loaf around and pick wildflowers for half an hour, then we'll go on our way rejoicing."

Bill called his service "The Death Valley Chug Line." Others followed him and automobile stages began to wear ruts that passed for roads in the desert.

People have never stopped coming to the valley. They come to see the Devil's Cornfield where the roots of the brush are stripped by the wind. The devil has more than his due; there is the Devil's Golf Course where rocks are scattered over the desert and Dante's View overlooks the valley floor.

The Black Mountains rise in steep cliffs above Badwater, a saline pool that is generally considered to be the lowest point in the United States, though technically that spot is a few miles to the south west. The 11,049 feet of snow covered Telescope Peak reflect in this small salty pool.

Nature has created extreme oddities. The racetrack is a playa so smooth that large boulders actually move across its surface. Plants adapt by spreading enormous root systems. Some plants cover their leaves with a sort of varnish to protect them from the hot dry air. Others develop a soft fuzz for the same purpose.

Bighorn sheep can go for three days on one drink of water. Pupfish and tiny shrimp live in the brine pools.

It is an awesome natural wonder. The next time you have a few days, why not spend them at "Bellerin' Teck's" old ranch? ●

Note: Abigail's tablecloth survived and has been exhibited twice in Death Valley.

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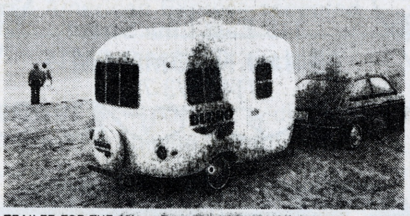

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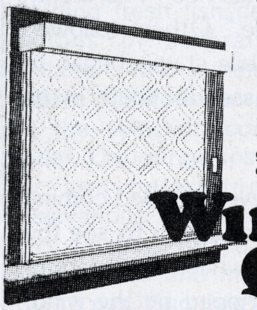

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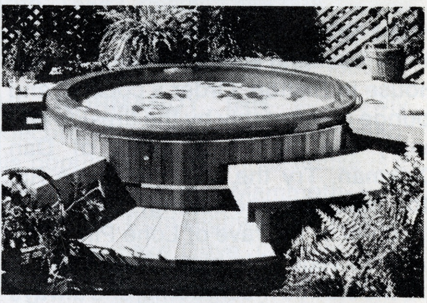

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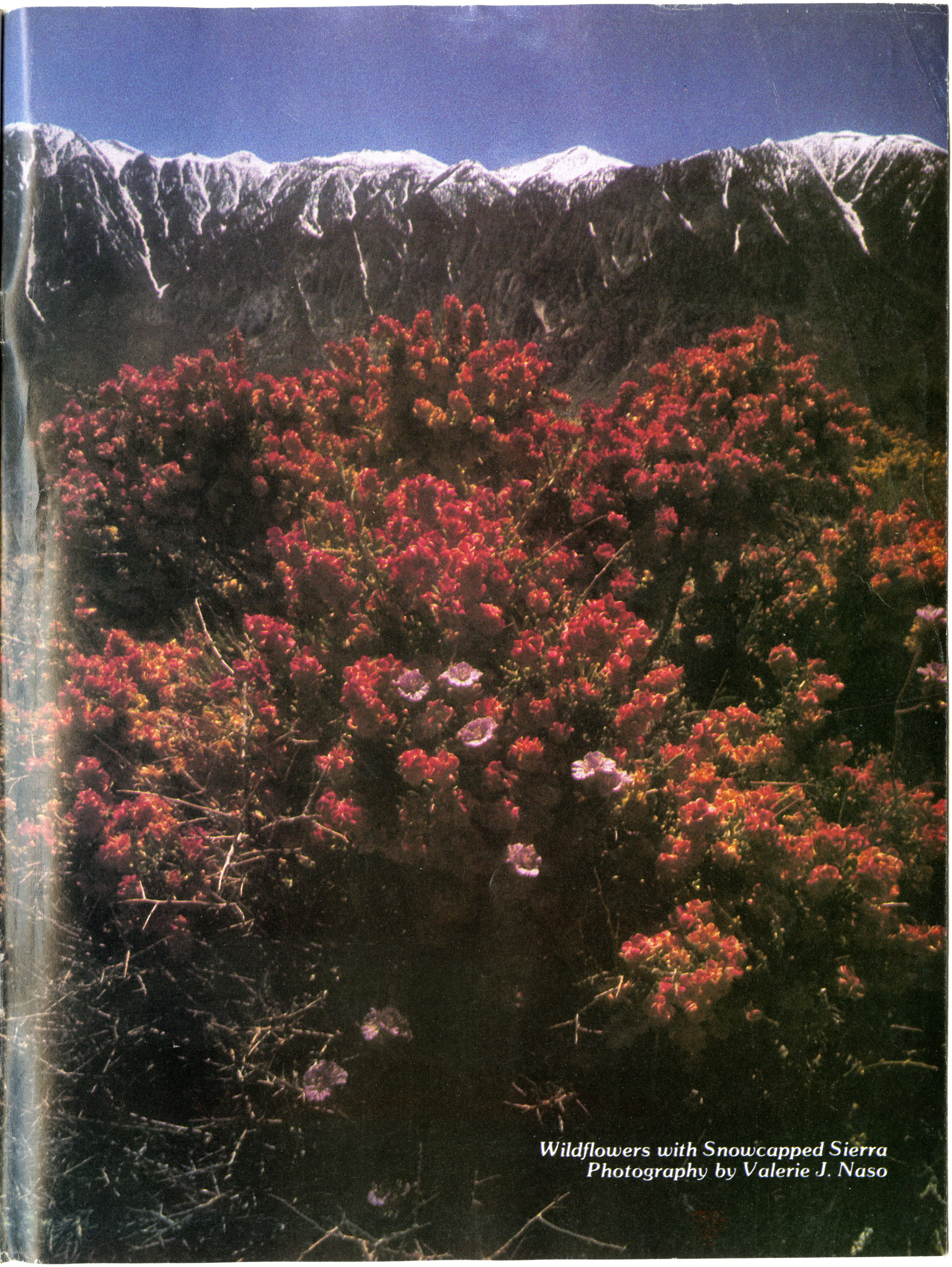

Wildflowers with Snowcapped Sierra
Photography by Valerie J. Naso

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